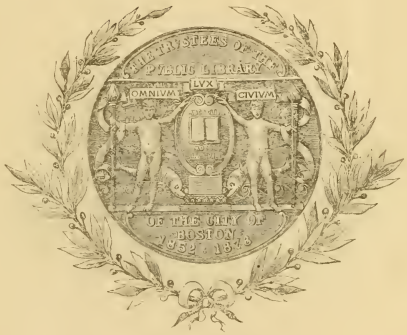

GENEVRA;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF A PORTRAIT,

BY AN AMERICAN LADY.

A RESIDENT OF WASHINGTON CITY.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

Philadelphia:
T. B. PETERSON, No. 98 CHESNUT STREET.
ONE DOOR ABOVE THIRD.

TO

MARIE DE CARVALLO,

MINISTERESS FROM CHILI;

AS A SLIGHT BUT SINCERE TOKEN OF ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM, THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED, BY

THE AUTHOR.

4153

GENEVRA;

OR, THE

HISTORY OF A PORTRAIT.

CHAPTER I.

"CLARENCE, my dear fellow, pray ring the bell, and let us know when that confounded dinner will be ready; the carriage will be here before we are ready for a drive to the Campagna."

I felt out of spirits and in an ill mood; but mechanically I rose and rang the bell. Our Italian attendant soon made his appearance. "Peppo,"—demanded my friend, the Hon. Augustus Morton, in a mixture of bad Italian and French, which he had learned during our two weeks' sojourn at Rome,—"Peppo, when will dinner be ready? Don't you know I told you this morning to prepare for us a nice English dinner, and have it early too?"

"Si Signor," replied Peppo, standing with his toes bent in, twisting a dirty velvet cap in his hand, ornamented round the edge with tarnished gilt lace, "ma Signor Inglese, say cinque bra, non rolamente che tre ora adesso."

"O, it's only three, eh—how came I to make such a mistake?" He looked at his watch: it had stopped. "Well, Peppo," he continued, in Italian, "can't you tell them to hurry their operations, and let us have our dinner now. We have an engagement. Go and see if they cannot serve it at once."

Peppo made his obeisance, and disappeared through the low, narrow door. "It is unfortunate that I did not think to set the time. We need not have returned from Tivoli for an hour."

"I am not at all sorry, for my part," I rejoined. "I take but little interest in broken columns, decayed monuments, and old ruins, places

of assignations for owls and bats; in fact, one half the persons who visit Rome care no more about these remains of Rome's ancient grandeur than the doves who make their nests amid the ruins. It has become fashionable of late years to visit Rome, and carry home from the city a collection of antique relics, busts, and every variety of curiosities, all of which are treasured as rare trophies of travel in classic land; a feeling I cannot at all sympathize with. You have the enthusiasm of the grandeur of Rome almost entirely to yourself, my friend. I assure you I have had but few attacks of the fashionable epidemic since my arrival."

"You are in an ill humor to day, I see, Clarence," goodnaturedly replied Morton, as he walked to and fro in our dingy dining-room with his hands under his coat tails; "but it is not Rome that vexes you, half as much as the comfortless dreary way in which they manage everything here. If we could only transport our English neatness and comfort to this beautiful climate, it would be a heaven on earth."

At this moment Peppo returned with the intelligence that the cook absolutely could not serve dinner a moment before the time appointed.

"Well, what can't be cured, must be endured," responded Morton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "But since we have two hours on our hands, and nothing to amuse us in-doors, suppose we take a walk toward the Coliseum, and take another look at it. It bears observation more than once. There is a fine artist, Signor Carrara, who lives in that vicinity, and, with your leave, we will drop in at his studio, and examine his gallery of paintings."

"As you please, Augustus," I answered; for Morton being five years my senior, naturally took the lead. We had graduated at Oxford together; and on leaving England for a two years' jaunt to the continent, my father had particularly recommended his darling son to Morton's fraternal care. We had spent some time in Paris, flirting with the prettiest women we saw; but that's not saying much for them, after all; for the French women do not depend for their attractions on beauty. They are sprightly, piquant, and witty generally, but they do not posess that native beauty of form and face, we meet with so frequently among the higher classes of the German and English women. Taste in dress and the arts of coquetry, so well understood and practised by the French women, supply the place of greater personal beauty. While in Paris, Morton had purchased and shipped for England a perfect cabinet shop of curiosities; but I, being less influenced by the mania for everything foreign, bought but little.

We had descended the Rhine together, and together admired the

wild majesty of its scenery. And sometimes as our bark glided past one of those perpendicular mountains, whose summit seems to kiss the clouds, on top of which, you frequently see perched the ruins of one of those castles built in the olden days of feudal war and terror. Sometimes, I say, I felt a desire to fix my abode, and pass my days in solitude, far from the busy haunts of men, on the banks of that noble river. But then, the thought recurred to my mind: A life spent in dreamy abstraction is a useless one. A life without action, is like a body without a soul. The busy world; the cares, disappointments, and numberless vexations one meets with, all tend to develope many faculties of mind, which, buried in the depths of solitude, might remain forever undiscovered.

We had visited Vienna, the seat of elegance and learning; and after spending sometime in the smaller towns of Germany and Switzerland, we found ourselves one bright day at Rome. During a fortnight we had been occupied every day in sight-seeing; visiting the Vatican, Saint Peter's, his Holiness the Pope, and all the wonders of the eternal city; and eternal to me, in sober truth, it seemed, as, entering the ancient town by Romulus' gate, the city dawned upon my view like a vast ocean before me.

But where did I leave my friend? Oh, he took his hat, and so, cautious reader, will I take mine, and follow him. We traversed several grass grown streets, faced on each side, by old houses, built in the Italian style, now fast tottering to decay. Before one of these, stood a company of street singers. A man advanced in years, whose gray hair was illumined by the bright rays of the sun, stood playing on a hand-organ, while a sweet little girl of eight or nine years, with light hair and fine blue eyes, jingled a tambourine at his side. There was something in the sad subdued look of the child, as she timidly advanced toward us, perceiving we were strangers, that almost called the tears to my eyes, as Morton and myself simultaneously threw a gold piece into the old tambourine she extended to receive it.

We passed on, and the next corner hid them from our view. "What a pity such a pretty child should be trained to beggary," remarked I, as we walked on.

"Yes, it is; but such things are so common in this country, they have ceased to astonish me: indeed, it would be difficult to say what had best be done for the amelioration of the Italians; like everything else, they have had their day; and now night and darkness are hanging over them."

I scarcely heard him; for now we came full in view of that massive

structure, the Coliseum. One side of it is much decayed and crumbled away, and forms a gap in the round outline. We entered through one of the ivy-hung arches, and found ourselves in the vast interior. Several little shrines, the devout offerings of humble superstition, occupied the vast space, where, so many hundred years ago, the gladiators had fought in the yearly games. At one of these, covered with a white cloth, on which were placed a crucifix and bottle of holy water, knelt a young woman with her hands clasped in prayer. She wore the picturesque costume of the Neapolitans. The attitude of devotion contrasted strangely with my recollection of the scenes of which that place had once been the theatre of action.

"This is a most extraordinary structure, so immense!" exclaimed Morton, whose ideas were of the most matter-of-fact description.

I made no reply. My mind was abstracted, it had flown back to the olden times. I thought I saw the dying gladiator leaning on his sword, while the arena rung with shouts of triumph for his conqueror. I saw start up from all parts of the old ruin, that vast wall of human faces, all gazing upon the dying man; but what mattered it to him, the world and all its cares was vanishing fast from his view; his glazed eyes close, his clenched hands stiffen, and his spirit leaves its earthly tenement with the last shout of applause for his conqueror.

I started from my day-dream, and looking for my friend, saw him standing at the other end of the amphitheatre, gazing wistfully up at the sky, through the gap which yawned above us. As I approached him, he exclaimed, "We had better go, or we shall not have time to see Signor Carrara's paintings before dinner, as we have been here an hour.

"An hour! impossible, it is not more than ten minutes."

"I know it seems no more than that to you; but it is, nevertheless, an hour since we entered here; and I am afraid of taking cold from the dampness of the ground; but you were dreaming of the 'Sorrows of Werter,' or some other sentimental subject, and of course, thought not of time. Come, mon ami, let us depart." He linked his arm in mine and we passed out into the street, leading to that part of the city he had designated as the abode of Signor Carrara.

After a few minutes' walk, he stopped before an old mansion, built in the Venetian style, with a balcony and latticed windows, jealously closed. The appearance of the house was antique and gloomy, even more so than any of the private mansions I had yet seen in Rome. Morton ascended the door-steps, and vigorously rang the bell. The sound seemed to echo through the whole house, as though it were

deserted. A moment after I heard the grating of bolts being undone, the door swing back heavily on its hinges; and, standing on its threshold, I saw an old domestic, with a grave, sad countenance, and dressed with greater neatness than the generality of Italian servants. He smiled gaily, and greeted Morton with a respectful obeisance, saying something in Italian, which I did not understand; for Morton was an old friend of the Signor's, having visited Rome four years before. His question, "Was the Signor at home?" he answered, "Yes," and requested us to follow him. We traversed a long gallery, then ascended a lofty staircase, ornamented with fine paintings and statues, placed in niches along the wall. At the end of another gallery, the Italian stopped at a door, and knocked. An elderly man, whose hair was slightly tinged with gray, attired in a plain suit of black velvet, opened the door, and, upon seeing Morton, shook him heartily by the hand, and welcomed him back to Rome, in terms of the most polite affability. His manner seemed to partake more of English cordiality than of the grave distant manner the Italians generally preserve to strangers. To my surprise, he spoke to me in good English, upon Morton's presenting me as Mr. Mowbray of London. Augustus entered the room with the air of one perfectly familiar to its precincts, and seated himself in a crimson velvet arm-chair, near the artist's easel. Persia's carpets covered the floor; curtains of crimson velvet fell in heavy folds from the windows; but the splendid paintings with which the walls of the studio were hung, constituted its greatest ornament. There were the faces of youth, and the faces of age. Side by side they hung. There were Cardinals in their black velvet hats, and the heavy folds of their black robes. There were the handsome faces of many of Italy's proudest sons, and the fair, unfurrowed brow, the black eye, large and languishing, of many a one of its fair daughters.

"You have not been long in Rome, I presume, Signor," remarked Carrara, as he returned to his easel, with his pallette in his hand.

"But two weeks."

"Two weeks! indeed, you owed an old friend a visit sooner," addressing Morton.

"I should have done myself the pleasure of calling on you before this, but I have been engaged in such a continual round of business, that I really could not snatch time." What a confounded lie, thought I to myself, as I stood with my back to them, attentively regarding a picture, which hung encased in a magnificent frame, opposite me. But Morton would say anything as an excuse, to avoid offending

a friend, and Signor Carrara, as I afterward discovered, had been to him a very kind one.

The picture upon which I gazed, was the portrait of a lady in the dawn of youth. I felt certain that it was, or had been taken as the resemblance of some earthly object. She was young and very beautiful. She could not have numbered more than twenty summers when that was painted. She sat, inclining forward, as if to speak. Her finger pressed to her rosy lip, as though she said 'beware.' Her robe hung in light folds over the full bust, and was confined at the waist by a scarf. A circlet of gems clasped the small aristocratic head, and sparkled on the auburn hair. The hair, put smooth back from the face, was gathered in two long braids behind, which fell below the waist. The complexion, white as alabaster. The eyes, so deeply beautifully blue. All these attributes combined to form an expression of angelic purity and sweetness, such as I had never seen expressed in any human countenance before.

"Of whom is this a portrait, Signor?" I inquired of the Italian, interrupting his conversation with Morton.

Carrara's black eyes rested sadly upon the picture a moment, then turned suddenly away.

"It is the portrait of an Austrian lady. A Viennese," he answered abruptly.

"Is she living still." I asked?

"No she has been dead many years."

"Is it not flattered? was she as beautiful as this?"

"She was far more beautiful than I have been able to portray her."

"How long since it was painted?"

"More than twenty years ago."

"What picture is it you are talking about, Clarence?" demanded Morton, looking up from a portfolio of prints which lay upon the artist's table.

"This one," I replied, pointing to it.

"Ah, yes. I see a very handsome woman. I admire your taste. Pray, may I ask her name, Signor Carrara, unless, indeed," he added archly, "she happened to be a beau ideal of yours; in that case, I waive the question."

The Italian blushed to his very eyebrows, and looked almost angry for an instant; but he answered immediately,

"You are welcome to ask the name of that or any other portrait in my studio. Her name was Genevra Sfonza."

"I like the style in which it is taken. Very fanciful and airy. She

almost seems to be floating on a cloud, observed my friend, as he came and stood by my side before it. "If I had a wife and were going to have her portrait taken, I should choose such an attitude. But I am thankful to be a bachelor, untrammelled and free. A single man can visit, seek lady's society, if he wants it; in short, do what he pleases, without having some jealous Juno tearing after him, if he happen to look at any other set of features than his 'cara spanta's.'"

Carrara smiled, and I laughed, as I always did at my friends' drolleries. "Come Clarence," he exclaimed, seizing me by the arm, "let's take a general look at all the pictures, and then, if you are willing, return home. Dinner will be waiting for us."

"We took a general survey of the rest of the paintings, among which, where some valuable originals, by the old masters. But none of them, in grace of attitude, or beauty of expression, could compare with that of the lovely Viennese.

"I am quite in love with this picture," I remarked to the artist, as I again stopped before it; after looking at all the politicians, warriors, sculptors, artists, and beauties portrayed on canvass.

"Almost every one who visits my room, admires it," responded Carrara.

I felt almost jealous, as he said this, that any one but myself should be allowed the pleasure of gazing upon that sweet face. I wished to have it exclusively to myself, where I alone could come and look upon its beauty. What selfish creatures men are.

The kind hearted Italian offered us a colation of Smyrna figs, grapes, oranges, and light Catalonia wine. We partook slightly, and then took our hats to depart.

"I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you frequently, during your stay in Rome," was his parting invitation, as he accompanied us through the long galleries, and down the lofty stair-case we had ascended.

"We shall certainly trespass frequently on your politeness, Signor," was our parting response, as we passed into the street and wended homeward.

Arrived at our hotel by the same route we came; we entered our comfortless dingy saloon, which served in the double capacity of dining-room and parlor. The table was set for dinner, but no dinner served, and Morton impatiently pulled the bell. Peppo answered the summons, bearing in his hands a dish of roast beef, burnt almost black, while treading close on his heels, came his female colleague, Jeannette, her hands loaded also with plates of different sizes, and looking as if she bore the fate of Cato and of Rome upon her shoulders, attired in

all that dirty finery, for which the lower classes of the Italians are distinguished. Peppo deposited, what he considered, this elegant repast, upon the table, with the air of a conqueror offering his mistress the spoil of foreign lands.

"Here, Signor, here be one English dinner, la veritable chose, tout entierement l'Inglese," exclaimed Peppo, who valued himself upon his acquirements in the languages, understanding about a dozen words of English, French, and Spanish; but like many another fool, if he was happy in his ignorance, and imagined himself wise, why it was just the same—at least to him the same. I have often wondered, whether it were not better to slumber on in ignorance, rather than make some little progress in knowledge, and after all, discover (even should we reach the highest point of earthly wisdom) that all is doubt and conjecture.

"Come Mowbray, my friend," cried Augustus, as he drew a chair to the table, "come let us commence operations, for I am nearly famished. Peppo where are the Wine coolers and goblets, make haste and bring them. You can go Jeannetta. Clarence what will you take?"

I requested a piece of the before-mentioned burnt beef, and helped myself to some peas, which looked as if they had been grown beneath the burning suns of Syria, dashed over with some description of Italian sauce; as for potatoes, they are an eatable unknown in Italy; nature, however, has kindly supplied the place of many of our northern vegetables, by the luxurious fruits of the country; one scarcely needs any other food beside the luscious champagne grape, the yellow orange, pine-apple, zapota, and a dozen other fine fruits, the names of which escape my recollection.

"Here, Peppo, come take away this elegant English dinner of yours, and serve dessert," said Morton laughingly, after having tried in vain to masticate some of the tough meats, and dried up vegetables. "Don't make another attempt in the English style, I beg of you, for really this one is quite killing."

"Le diner no good," ejaculated Peppo, holding up both hands in amazement, "apres tous les soins que j'ai pris; je vous assure, Signor, que c'est une diner a la'Anglaise."

"I assure you, my good fellow, that it is perfectly uneatable; here take it all away, and hand the fruit and wine. I am sorry I told you to attempt any thing in English style. I might have known we should get nothing to suit us; however, make haste, for our carriage is at the door, to take us to the campagna."

Peppo, in great agitation, at the failure of his attempt, removed the

dishes, and as soon as we had dispatched dessert, we entered our Stanhope, and drove to the campagna.

I kept my promise, and often visited Signor Carrara. I liked him more, the better I became acquainted with him; there are some characters who only show their fine traits upon a close acquaintance. We all of us, more or less, feel an attraction of sympathy, or repulsion of antipathy at first sight, an indefinite presentiment that we shall either like or dislike; there was something in Carrara's manner, so different to the giddy light-heartedness of the generality of his countrymen, calculated to inspire one with confidence in his integrity: his calm countenance expressed benevolence, patience, and philosophical indifference. I might have sought in vain for those deep traces of satiety and discontent, which pleasure imprints upon the faces of her votaries. He seemed to be at peace with all mankind, and among all his extensive acquaintance in Rome, I never once heard him unkindly spoken of. I frequently passed hours in his studio, while Morton was engaged in a continual round of pleasure.

CHAPTER II.

Carrara inhabited but two apartments in his stately mansion, besides his elegant studio, and a large exhibition room of magnificent paintings. All the other apartments were locked up, and left untenanted, although the old domestic, who had been a household fixture for more than twenty years, informed me they were all splendidly furnished; although uninhabited, and seldom opened, except twice a year, to be cleaned; I could not help wondering that any man, especially a bachelor artist, should keep a large, vacant house to himself, of no use to him, without letting it to some one, as an Englishman would have done; unless, indeed, he were a man of rank and fortune, but this Carrara, I presumed, was not, and I had seen enough of him to be convinced of his unassuming mind, and simple mode of living. Perhaps he had accumulated a comfortable fortune by his unwearied application, and economy, and having secured sufficient means for the future years of his life, thought it unnecessary to make money by his house. Of his private circumstances I knew nothing, and, therefore, dismissed the subject from my mind.

"How many different faces, and what varieties of character you must see in the course of a year," I one day remarked to him, as he stood at his easel, a large bunch of brushes in his hand, busily employed in painting a naked nymph, bathing in a limpid stream.

"Yes," he replied, "an artist has ample opportunity, if he is capable of doing so, of observing characters, as well as faces."

"Are you a physiognomist?"

"I make no pretensions to being one."

"Can you tell an honest man from a rogue?"

"I think I can."

"Then tell me, my friend, tell me truly, what do you think of my face?"

I pushed back my hair from my forehead, as I asked the kind old Italian this odd question; and he looked at me rather quizically for a second, as if to ascertain whether I was in earnest, or seeking to make game of him; being assured, I suppose, by the grave expression of my countenance, that I was serious, he answered:

"You have a frank, talented, amorous expression of face, such as many of your countrymen, whom I have seen, possessed."

"Amorous, is it possible you have made such a dreadful mistake?—you, a man of so much penetration, to say such a thing as that; why my dear Signor, I am as cold as the eternal snows of Russia's mountains. I follow the fashionable plan, and invariably treat all womankind with polite rudeness; in fact, I think I hate women: the sexes are, of course, natural enemies to each other."

"You cold, about as cold as the crater of Mount Etna; how can you sit there, and presume to tell me such shocking stories?" Carrara laughed; he seldom laughed, or even smiled, but when he did, his face lighted up with a sunny glow. I was about to deny this accusation flatly, merely for the sake of a laughing argument, when, in looking for a stray engraving I was copying, which had fallen on the floor, I knocked down an unfinished picture, which stood with its face to the wall; I glanced at it, and was about to replace it in its original position, when Carrara observed, glancing at it as he spoke,

"Talking of variety of character, that woman certainly was an oddity in her way: I never saw a more singular person."

"The original of this picture, do you mean?" I asked, as I set it back again.

"Yes," replied the artist; "she was the friend of Prince Monteolene. I painted a half length portrait for her, and began this one, but the prince parted from her, after having lived with her three or four

years, and she left the city, leaving this picture unfinished on my hands."

"She was handsome," I remarked, as I looked at the face more attentively—"a voluptuous, not a pure, or spiritual beauty."

"Such was her character; she possessed some fine traits of disposition, however, which, had they been accompanied by a well balanced mind, trained to virtue, she might have been an ornament to society. She took an interesting little girl from one of the nunnery schools, had her well educated, and taught the science of vocal music thoroughly, then placed her on the stage, through the influence of some of the professors of music, who felt interested in the child; where she now is, a brilliant star in the musical world. That action, certainly showed a kind, generous disposition."

"Such incidents of character, are extraordinary, even among the best of human beings, leaving the immoral out of the question," and, I added, "you artists have every facility, here in Italy, in regard to obtaining models."

"We have more applications from poor girls, some reputable, some disreputable, than we wish or require; many have offered themselves to me as models, without price, and the very prettiest can be had for a small sum."

"Are any of these models virtuous?"

"I have known many who were correct in their behaviour, and, on the contrary, many who were dissolute. A person, whether man or woman, reared to all the comforts and elegancies of a luxurious life, can scarcely conceive the many temptations to which these poor girls are exposed; living in miserable huts, feeding upon the coarsest food; while men of fashion and fortune, attracted by their pretty looks, frequently make them liberal offers of protection, which they sometimes refuse, but generally end by accepting. Besides, the standard of female virtue, does not rank as high in our country as in yours; therefore, their departure from the paths of virtue, is looked upon more in a philosophical point of view, as a foible, incident to all humanity, and tolerated with more leniency."

"I sometimes think the Italian plan the best."

"It may not be best, as regards the mass of the population, but considered individually, I cannot but prefer it."

"Do you never feel sad, Signor?"—I asked suddenly, after having been silent some minutes, absorbed in thought—"do you never feel sad sometimes, when you reflect upon the frailties and miseries of poor human nature?"

"You are now, my young friend," answered Carrara, "just on the dawn of manhood, when, having indulged ideal dreams of what the world *ought* to be, you are gradually awakening to a perception of the vast difference between the ideal and the actual; what now appears to you so sentimentally sad, will gradually become a matter of course, and you will grow fond of the world as it is; as your freshness of feeling, and ideality of mind wears away, habit becomes a second nature; we may dislike our habitation, but we dislike a change, because we are accustomed to the old abode. Middle age and the decline of life, which lessen our sense of enjoyment, increase our love of life for that reason; and you will find, as you journey on, the longer you live, the more tenaciously will you cling to life."

"I presume you are right, and if I live long enough to realize your sage prediction, then I will think of your words."

I took my hat as I said this, considering that I had bored my kind friend long enough, by a visit of three hours, and left the studio, with his repeated invitation ringing in my ears, that I should come very soon again, and pass every morning, if it pleased me, at his house. I directed my steps toward modern Rome, and the Piazza del populo; as I passed along the principal streets, I saw the shops adorned with every description of masquerade dresses, and immense quantities of bonbons, in anticipation of the approaching carnival; many of the giddy throng were already attired in masquerade, passing each other; and all unlucky foot passengers, with the "corfette" the Italians make such liberal use of during the carnival, their animated gestures, and sprightly looks, forming a picturesque scene. While above my head shone the cerulean sky, dotted with golden clouds, and the horizon's verge reflected the brilliant red of the setting sun's declining fires.

The happy dispositions and buoyant temperaments of these Italians, enable them to bear misfortunes, and even the squalid poverty, to which they are frequently subjected, with a serenity of temper, and happy confidence in the future, unknown to the colder inhabitants of northern climes. A proud Englishman would put an end to his existence, were he obliged to encounter half what an Italian would endure with philosophic indifference.

I found the Piazza del populo crowded with equestrians, pedestrians, and every description of equipages, giving a brilliant, showy effect, to this classic and beautiful square. How many recollections of happy hours and days, are connected in my memory, with the name of Rome; of weeks and months, that sped like hours, borne only too rapidly away upon the wings of Time.

The ladies talked, laughed, and flirted with the gentlemen, as they promenaded up and down, just as we do in England, or any other civilized land; the liveried footmen stood together in groups, and chatted, perhaps of scandal transpiring in their little world of action; monks glided past me, their heads bowed down, telling their rosarys while they stealthily eyed the women; the peasant girls in their tasteful costume, the red or blue woollen petticoat, ornamented with black horizontal bands, exchanged love tokens with their lovers; the military rode through the square, with much display; the nobility bowed and smiled to each other, as they drove swiftly by in their stately carriages; all nature, and almost every face wore a smile.

Leaving the gay scene, I passed out at the gate opposite to that through which I had entered, and was standing gazing upon the lofty dome, and magnificent collonade of Saint Peter's, which rose towering above all other objects in the distance, when I felt my arm suddenly grasped, and a stentorian voice exclaimed, "Why, good heavens, Clarence, is this you? where in the name of wonder have you been all day? I've been wanting you to accompany me to a hundred and one places, and here you are dreaming about the Persian invasion, perhaps in the Piazza del populo. I've met some very fine people here," he continued, as he linked his arm in mine, and gently turned me in the direction of our hotel. "Among others, there's a Countess Dettore, who having heard what a fine, agreeable fellow you are, sends you an invitation, through me, to her grand party, to-morrow night; come now, do be civil, and say you'll go; I am going; really, you have grown so desperately sentimental since your arrival here, there's no doing anything with you; you should go into society, be gay, and enjoy yourself."

"All people don't have the same mode of enjoyment," I replied. "I enjoy myself in my way, and you in yours; but who is this Countess of whom you speak; how came she to hear of me, and send me an invitation to her ball?"

"Oh, I knew her when I was here before, four years ago; she's a pleasant, chatty kind of person, gives nice balls, and that, you know, is the principal thing; I dare say you'll be pleased with her, however, when you get acquainted; she's often heard me speak of you since my arrival, and so, being about to give a ball, took the liberty of sending you an invitation, both verbal and written," and he handed me a delicate little note, superscribed in a small, feminine handwriting.

"You've been with Carrara, I suppose, the principal part of the day? you seem to have become great friends in a very short space of

time. Carrara's a kind-hearted, eccentric creature: I never knew him to take so sudden a fancy to any one, as he has to you. I went to Tivoli again this morning, after you left me," added my rattling friend, without waiting for an answer. "I was charmed; such pure air, delightful scenery; met Coningsby, he's just from home, says he's coming down to see you to-morrow; he'll return before we do, so we can send letters by him, if you like, to your parents."

We passed the magnificent arch of Constantine, and I paused to admire the exquisite fluting of the corinthian columns, and the statues of Dacian warriors, with which its front is adorned; while Morton strolled on ahead, picking wild flowers from the turf at his feet, and commenting upon the absurdity of old ruined arches, and sentimentalizing on ancient times.

We found, on reaching our hotel, that my valet Henri, had been passing away the time during my absence, by getting up a slight row with another fellow of his own stamp, in which he seemed to have got the worst of it, for he made his appearance with a black eye, and numerous other small wounds, in the shape of sundry scratches and knocks in the face from his assailant's fists. He had a long and grievous complaint to make me, of the ill usage he had received, and finished his speech by cursing Rome and everything Roman, wishing himself safe back again in the land of his nativity, the green mountains of the Tyrol. I interrupted him, however, by my stern commands and solemn adjurations, not to implicate himself in another such a fracas, hinting the fact, that upon a second repetition of the same thing, he would be obliged to enter the service of some other individual than myself, as I could not tolerate such disgraceful conduct in a personal attendant. The poor fellow looked remarkably foolish on hearing my stern rebuke, and promised obedience for the future, adding in extenuation of his behavior, "that he had not sought the row: Gustave had provoked him beyond himself; when others let him alone, he let everybody else alone."

I afterward discovered, to my great amusement, that the whole affair had originated from Gustave's having taken a fancy to the same girl, of whom my valet Henri was also desperately enamored; the result was, Henri in a fit of jealous rage at her manifest preference for his rival, said some insulting things to Gustave, which the latter would not take, and they ended the matter by a personal encounter; not after the style of the renowned knight of La Mancha, but in the genuine old fashion of pummelling each other with their fists. Gustave possessing a more athletic form and stronger muscles than my unfortunate valet,

succeeded in gaining a complete triumph over his rival in the courts of love. The whole affair was vastly ridiculous, and Morton and myself laughed vehemently at the discomfiture of poor Henri.

"After all," laughed Morton, "isn't it ridiculous to see what a devilish fool a man will make of himself for love of woman: it's all the same thing from a king to a beggar; the feeling is the same, the manner of showing it alone, is different. Now I really do wonder if any woman could excite me to the pitch I've seen this poor fellow wound up to, to-day?"

"I dare say," was my reply, "you and I are both human, and possess passions and feelings in common with every one else."

"Well, I havn't lost *my* heart since I've been here; that's to say, if I really possessed any when I made my advent into this confounded old ruined place; as for you, I believe you're in love with an inanimate picture. I prefer the real Simon pure flesh and blood myself; this falling in love with senseless canvass I consider quite absurd."

"You need not take the trouble to tell me that, Morton," I ejaculated, bursting into a fit of uproarious laughter; "one need only look at your face, to be assured that your feelings are not by any means *too Platonic*."

He laughed most heartily, although the jest was at *his* expense; and chancing to turn our eyes toward the door, we saw Peppo, who stood there bowing with all his might, like a chinese mandarin, and he informed us, after many demonstrations of respect and divers flourishes, that dinner awaited us in the new saloon, which had just been completed a few days previous. The saloon, which poor Peppo considered such a perfect chef-d'œuvre of architecture, proved to be a large, barn-like room, built of rough beams, stuccoed over with a coarse, inferior sort of plaster, very cold and comfortless looking, destitute of carpeting, and furnished with a long dining table, chairs set round it, and an iron lamp suspended from the ceiling, on this grand occasion of inaugurating us into our new dining-room; the dinner was extraordinarily fine, although everything was covered with oil and cayenne pepper in abundance, and Peppo officiated with becoming dignity.

This was Friday; the next day, Saturday, began the carnival, the great annual fête of Rome. We breakfasted earlier than usual, and Augustus joined the gay throng which crowded the streets in the direction of the Corso, where I agreed to join him, after having paid a morning call on Signor Carrara. Augustus declined accompanying me, as he said he wished to observe the populace and the different

costumes before the sport began, and I, therefore, proceeded to Carrara's house alone.

At the street door, I learned from his old attendant Guiseppe, that the Signor had not yet risen, being somewhat indisposed from a slight cold and sore throat; I sent in my card, and was about leaving to rejoin my friend, when Guiseppe came running back, saying the Signor "would be happy to see me in his room, if I would honor him."

I followed the old man up the lofty stair-case, through the long galleries past the studio, when he turned down a short passage and ushered me into a small elegantly furnished room, where lay Carrara in a black velvet gown and cap, reclining upon a sofa.

"So you are too sick to accompany us to the gay Corso to-day, my kind friend?" I asked, after having cordially shaken hands with him and drawn my chair close to his sofa.

"I do not feel well enough to venture out," he replied; "nevertheless, I thank you most sincerely for your politeness in calling for me; this is a mere transient attack of sore throat, I presume; I have had many such before, I shall be recovered from it in a day or two; I regret not being able to see the horse races and the ball to-night, as I have been an annual spectator for the last twenty years. You will attend the masquerade ball this evening? of course, I need not ask, every one goes to the carnival ball."

"I have not yet made up my mind, perhaps I may: it will be a gay affair I suppose?"

"Very: one sees such variety of costume, and variety of faces, it forms altogether an interesting sight, especially to a stranger."

"I should think," I remarked, glancing around the quiet room, "I should think, my dear Signor, that you would sometimes feel lonesome, shut up alone in this spacious house of yours, especially when sick, with no female relative or friend to nurse you?"

"Guiseppe generally answers all my purposes as nurse and attendant; he is faithful and constant; when very ill I sometimes employ a hired nurse; but as for other higher attentions, what is there about my person, a poor, ugly old man, already tottering on the brink of the grave, what is there about me to attract beauty's gentle care? No, no, my dear young friend, myself has sufficed thus far, and myself will suffice to the end; my own thoughts and recollections of the past, are society enough for me."

I had never heard Carrara speak so sadly before, for although philosophic in his tone of mind, he was generally cheerful, sometimes even

gay. I attributed it to his slight indisposition and his solitude, and took my leave, promising to call on the morrow, and bring an entertaining English novel to read aloud to him.

As I mechanically traversed the long distance which intervened between his house and the Corso, I soliloquized upon the lonely life a man leads without wife or children. He seems to hang, as it were, a loose disjointed member upon society, disconnected from the rest of his fellow beings, by all those household ties, which seem to form the connecting links of life. I thought of myself, and then my thoughts reverted to the beautiful portrait in Carrara's studio, and I ardently wished that I might see the original of that picture. "Suppose you should see her this day," reason said, "will not time have changed her? where would be the rosy hue of health and beauty's bloom?" I suddenly remembered, Carrara had told me she was dead. "She receives naught now, then, but the clammy embraces of death; better that, however, than live to become a withered hag, after having being so gloriously beautiful."

I reached the Corso, and sought diligently for Augustus, amid the dense crowd there; but nothing could I see of him in that multitude, moving to and fro like the gigantic waves of the ocean. I tried several times to pass over to the other side of the street, but was pushed back at every movement I made; I gave up the attempt at last, in despair, and was about fixing my temporary abode upon a large sign post, commanding an extensive view of the street and the course where the horses were to race, when I felt myself gently plucked by the sleeve, and turning, saw a young peasant, who quietly requested me to follow him; he had spoken to me in broken English, supposing, I presume, that I did not understand Italian, but I boldly demanded in his native tongue, what he wanted of me. Some recollections flashed through my mind of stories I had heard, about strangers in Rome being entrapped at carnival time by brigands in masquerade; but a single glance at the face of this unsophisticated child of nature reassured me, and I felt that my suspicions in this instance were absurd. He uttered a joyful exclamation at hearing me speak Italian, and said that my friend, seeing me in the crowd, had sent him to find me, and requested me to come to him on the balcony of one of the old Pallazo's fronting the Corso.

My peasant elbowed his way through the multitude to the steps of the Palazzo; he then conducted me up stairs, through a splendid suite of rooms, and out upon a balcony, where I was received by Augustus, who anxiously inquired about the good old artist; and hearing that he

was too sick to accompany me, we mutually turned our attention upon the gay scene at our feet. The Corso was already filled with coaches, and persons on foot of every nation under the sun; but I saw but few masks. A ceremony of some kind or other took place, I heard, at the Capitol, which we did not see; in which a deputation of Jews formally petition the governor of the city for permission to remain in it another year, which he grants them upon condition of their paying the expenses of the races. The military swept through the streets in their showy uniform; and presently came the governor and senator (Rome's fallen grandeur boasts but one now) in a grand procession of gilded coaches, while behind them came a great number of men, showily dressed, on horseback, bearing in their hands beautiful banners, some of them elegantly embroidered and presented by the ladies of Rome; after these had passed, the fun and merriment began.

A general pelting commenced from the windows of showers of sugar nuts, which were exchanged by those in coaches as they passed. The whole street presented a scene of childish gayety and confusion, perfectly indescribable, and, absurd as it appeared to me at first, I became much interested in the sport, and filling my pockets with "corfette," began pelting as manfully as the silliest among them.

The windows and balconies were hung with rich silks and velvets, which, waving in a gentle breeze beneath that glorious sunny sky, mingled with the rich dresses, and often lovely faces beaming with smiles, as they surveyed the animated multitude from the windows and balconies of their homes. The loud laughter and sprightly movements of the crowd, all combined to present a brilliant scene.

The amusements of the day concluded with the horse race; a trumpet was sounded, and fifteen or sixteen ponies made their appearance, led by grooms very gayly dressed; who, after some difficulty, arranged the fiery little steeds behind a rope stretched across the street. At a given signal the rope was dropped, and away they flew down the Corso, as if the evil one was at their heels; at their sides were suspended leaden balls, filled with needles, which lashed them as they spurred forward, and the wild shouts of the crowd as they closed in behind them, sent them on with the fleetness of the wind; they ran furiously for about a mile, to the end of the street, where they were stopped by a large canvass, suspended across the way; not more than half reached the goal, and three or four, I noticed, who seemed to dislike these kinds of operations, ran off, knocking down everything and everybody who obstructed their progress. The races are repeated every evening near sunset, during the carnival.

The day's sport being over, gradually this odd me lly of human beings left the Corso. I watched the different faces and forms as they slowly disappeared; the women looking tired and languid, like drooping water lilies; the robust peasant, and languid nobleman in his carriage; the horse jockeys, and confused assortment of all sorts of vehicles, in the course of a few moments had vacated the square.

Augustus and I also left our position on the balcony, he, rather reluctantly, for he seemed to have been quite enchanted by a young beauty, stationed upon the balcony of a large house next door to the Palazzo, who had been making love to him with her lovely dark eyes during the morning; he said he should like to know who she was sighed, and seemed to feel the premonitory symptoms of one of those attacks of sentiment he had so often deprecated in me.

A grand masquerade ball was to be given in the evening at one of the theatres, for this purpose the pit was covered over, and the whole establishment thrown open. One could wear costume or not, as they chose; we preferred the civilian dress, and notwithstanding our preconceived notions of its absurdity, and determined to be mere lookers on, we had not been long there, before we became involved in the giddy whirl of fun and nonsense, and talked and laughed as foolishly as any there; almost all wore costume, but there were but few masks, many of the costumes were tasteful and costly, others were wretched, and would have disgraced the wardrobe of one of our strolling circus companys. I saw his satanic majesty sipping ices with a Polish lady, while close behind them stood a beautiful Aspasia, in another part of the room Achilles was savagely flourishing his sword, and Venus sat at the feet of her Mars. Brother Jonathan knocked against me, trying to make a first rate bargain; and Paul Pry was there, attending to everybody's business but his own. I was deserted by Morton, who dashed after a blue domino, whom he took to be his beauty of the balcony; he was disappointed, however, for although the lady's face was beautiful, it was not she. I saw many long-bearded Turks, fops of a hundred years ago, and exquisites of the present day, mad poets, quack doctors; and lastly, I saw what recalled to mind many early associations—two handsome young persons, evidently lovers, in the costume of Petrach and his Laura; the girl's face was fair and sweet in its expression, she was a fine impersonation of that interesting character, the records of whose life have been so blended with romance, that we can with difficulty distinguish the real from the ficticious; certain it is, however, that such a being as Laura once existed, and that Petrach, enamored of her real or fancied beauty,

addressed to her those eloquent sonnets, which are an ornament to the literature of his time. I remembered to have read them when a boy, by a favorite sister's side, beneath the linden trees in the park of my father's country seat; now that sister slept the dreamless sleep of death, under the shade of these very trees where in childhood she had played. The costume of these lovers, and the recollection of the sonnets, and my companion in their perusal, revived many a forgotten reminiscence of by-gone years.

Aurora had already begun to display her golden banner in the East, when, fagged out, and nearly stupified by our potations of champagne, we left the ball-room; daylight had begun to force its way into the salon de dance, displaying to no very fine effect, the tinsel finery, glazed muslins and pasteboards, of which the generality of the costumes were composed.

"A ball is a stupid thing anyhow," said Morton, yawning, "particularly when its all over, and one has talked and danced one's self nearly to death."

I felt too stupid myself to make any reply to this philosophical observation, as I followed my friend into our carriage.

In such scenes passed off the gay carnival during eight days. Punch's performance, the gay masquerading, the odd tricks performed by itinerant mountebanks, and divers absurdities of the populace themselves, formed the daily routine, usually concluded at night by a ball. On the last day, at night, after the races, the Corso appeared illuminated as if by magic, with thousands of lights carried by those on foot, in carriages, and displayed at all the windows; those are indeed unfortunate who cannot afford a light on the occasion. It is every one's business to extinguish his neighbor's light and preserve his own as long as he can; it is impossible to give an idea of the effect produced by such an odd scene, the glitter and confusion as they each endeavor to extinguish each other's torches and preserve their own, when viewed from the commanding position we occupied on the balcony of the Palazzo, the effect was singular and beautiful; gradually the lights became fewer and fewer, until at last they disappeared, the noise of the multitude died away, and the carnival was over.

The next morning, after breakfast, Augustus absolutely persisted in making me promise to accompany him to Tivoli, to pay a visit to Coningsby, who had hired a villa there; and although I cared little about going, yet to oblige him I consented. I sent the novel I had promised Carrara by my valet, with my compliments and inquiries about

his health, but we had started for Tivoli before Henri returned with an answer.

We remained a week with our friend, who, delighted to see us, entertained us with noble hospitality. The tasteful arrangement of his villa, the salubrious air and charming scenery of the surrounded country, over which was scattered many an ancient ruin, successively claimed our attention and admiration. Time spent agreeably flies rapidly away, on the contrary moments passed in pain or sorrow, are anxiously numbered. When our stanhope again stopped before the door of our hotel, it seemed but a few hours since we had left it.

CHAPTER III.

It wanted two hours of dinner, and, leaving Augustus to scold the servants and make whatever domestic arrangements he choose, I took my hat and sought the way to Carrara's house; the windows facing the street were bolted and barred as usual; I knocked loudly at the street door, but no one came; and after waiting a few minutes I knocked again, still no answer; I concluded Carrara must be out of town, perhaps on a visit, and was about going away when I saw old Guiseppe coming slowly toward the house; I waited until he reached me, and then asked if his master was well?

The old man looked at me with grave surprise, and mournfully exclaimed, "Ah, Signor! I see you have not heard the sad news. Master died the second day after you left for Tivoli, and was buried yesterday."

"Carrara dead!" I shrieked, rather than spoke; "you or I must be dreaming; it is impossible he could have died so very suddenly; he was living a week ago when I left for Tivoli."

"He had been sick, you know sir, all carnival time; it was only a simple sore-throat, to be sure, but he neglected it, he said it would get well of itself; but he grew worse instead of better, and gangrene had taken place before he would allow me to send for a physician. It was then too late; master became delirious, and talked constantly about you, and somebody whom he called "Genevra." He got his senses a little, just before he died, and calling me to his bedside, told me to give you a packet, which he placed in my hands. I told him you had gone to Tivoli for a few days, and that when you returned I would

do so. He said he was very sorry you were not here to see him die; that he never should see you again in this world. Shortly after, he became speechless, and the second day after your departure, in the afternoon, he died; a relative of his came to town just in time to witness his death, and attend to his funeral. He had written upon the back of the will, that it was not to be opened or read until your return, and Signor Terra told me to request you to call upon him as soon as you could after your return to town."

I scarcely heard him: I felt as if oppressed by a frightful nightmare. The idea that that kind old man was dead, whom I had so lately seen in good health and spirits; and dead so suddenly, so unexpectedly, was too strange and unaccountable for me to realize. Mechanically I followed Guiseppe into the house, and entered the studio, in which I had passed so many pleasant hours since my arrival in Rome; nothing was displaced from the position in which he had left it, when first taken sick; and notwithstanding the consciousness of his death, I momentarily expected to see his tall thin form, and benevolent face, appear at the open door. Guiseppe had left the room, and I fell into a reverie, in which were blended my sad regrets at this unexpected loss, when the old domestic returned, and handed me the packet his master bequeathed me as a legacy, together with the address of the lawyer who wished to see me. I put them both in my pocket; and then turned to the old man, who stood by my side, with his arms folded.

"And you, my good Guiseppe, what do you intend doing, now the good Signor is dead, where do you think of going to?"

Tears startled in the old man's eyes, as he replied—"I hardly know myself, sir, what I shall do; I think I will return into the country with Signor Carrara's cousin; I only liked Rome, because I could live with my dear, kind master; and now he's gone, I would rather go than stay."

"If you conclude to remain, Guiseppe, and if my influence can be of service in obtaining you another situation, call on me, and I will do whatever I can for you."

"I thank you a thousand times, Signor," answered the grateful Italian; and I sadly retraced my steps to our hotel. Augustus was almost as surprised as I had been, on hearing of the sudden death of his artist-friend; he could scarcely believe it, so unexpected had been the sad event, and expressed some curiosity to learn what I had to do with Carrara's will.

I had not spoken of the packet to Augustus: that was my own little secret; and when night had assumed her reign, I took a "bougie"

and established myself in my chamber, with the door locked to prevent intrusion, and proceeded to the examination of this mysterious package. After taking off the paper wrapper, I saw a small silver casket, locked, and the little gold key belonging to it, lying within the paper; upon unlocking it, I saw a bundle of manuscript, and a letter addressed to myself in Carrara's handwriting. Some of the papers of the diary had already become yellow from age. I hurriedly opened the letter, anxious to learn what this singular present meant; it was dated some days back, during carnival time; the contents were thus:—

"My dear young Friend,

"I feel a presentiment of my approaching dissolution; already the angel of death fans me with his wings, he beckons me to come to that unknown shore; he invites me to drink of the cup of oblivion, and forget all things in the quiet sleep of death. I am now an old man; I have experienced all that I shall ever experience of pleasure; the world is no longer either pleasing or new to me. Death, therefore, so far from appearing an enemy, seems like a dear friend, who comes to release me from future decrepitude and imbecility.

"You will recollect you one day asked me, while gazing upon the portrait of the beautiful Countess Calabrella, what had been her character, and her destiny in life? you seemed to admire, and love to look upon, that picture; when living, no man ever looked upon her without loving her; the manuscript enclosed within the casket is a diary of her own life, which she, confiding in my discretion, promised, and sent to me, previous to her final departure from Rome.

"The perusal of these sad recollections of her childhood, I feel confident, will interest you; they will, at least, exemplify the virtuous struggles of a noble soul, and that determined will, and perseverance in the paths of rectitude and morality, which sooner or later rises triumphantly over the transient contingencies of fortune.

"Farewell my friend, farewell; a mist seems gathering around my eyes. Oh, it is nothing, I—"

This unfinished letter was scarcely legible from blots and blurs; my poor friend had evidently indited it but a little while before his death, when his mind, as well as his body, enfeebled by illness, was becoming confused. He could not have bequeathed me a "memento" more acceptable to myself than this autobiography.

I opened the papers, which were written in a bold free hand;

snuffed the candle, and began to read; as I did so, a small alabaster time-piece upon my mantle struck nine.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

"While sitting to you for my portrait, you have often paid me compliments upon my beauty. I will not say that the language of compliment is unknown to me; yet, could you have seen me fourteen years ago, a ragged, houseless, wandering orphan child, you would never be able to recognize in my present self the same creature. My earliest recollections do not extend beyond the age of six years; but I still retain an indefinite remembrance of a tall, slender woman, who used to walk the floor with me, and hush me to sleep in her arms; it seemed to be in the country, for I remember hearing the mournful sighing of the winds, as they whistled through the trees, and of being frightened at the sound; these may be, however, merely the fancies or dreams of childhood.

"My first distinct remembrance, is of being a ragged, dirty child, —the protegé, or rather the slave of an old hag, the inhabitant of a wretched hovel; when not subjected to her abuse and savage tyranny, I was generally the companion of any little vagabonds I chanced to meet playing in the streets. What right that old woman had to my person, or how she ever obtained possession of me, I never knew; chance or fate, whichever it is that rules the actions of mankind, removed me so soon from her pernicious influence, and depraved example, that I never learned how our destinies came to be united. She sometimes sent me out alone at night, to the most public squares in the city of Vienna, and commanded me not to return without a certain number of *sous*, under penalty of being whipped with rods, till the blood ran down my back; frequently she beat me from sheer malice, merely to exercise her ill humor. In winter, my bed was a heap of dirty straw, in the loft of this miserable hut, where I lay and shivered with cold, while my Hecate-like protector, crouched in the chimney corner of the only room the house contained, dozed, and muttered over the embers of her fire. During summer I played about the streets, or grown bold from habit, boldly asked pennys from the passers-by, while the old woman performed her daily routine of thieving or begging in different parts of the town.

"Thus passed two years, in this depraved and wretched way; I was then eight years old, and reason began to shed some glimmering rays of light upon my benighted mind. I saw that hundreds of other

children did not live as I did: some were beautifully dressed, their hair combed smoothly, their faces and hands clean, while mine were as dirty as the rags I wore. All this was a perfect mystery to me; I could in no way explain it to myself, that other children, no prettier than myself, should revel in luxury, while I was left a neglected beggar child; alas! knowledge of the ways of the world has since then taught me the reason why. I always experienced a sorrowful regret, when I saw other children gayly dressed, smiling and happy. I did not envy *them*, but I wished to be so situated myself. The old woman, whom I called Granny, sometimes imposed upon the credulity of the vulgar, by telling fortunes; her wild eyes, of a greenish color, and straggling gray hair, accompanied by strange mysterious gestures, would not have disgraced the queen of the witches herself; and I presume she would have taught me the same nefarious trade, had not an unexpected event changed the whole course of my life.

"It was on a cold, dark evening in December; the air was keen and raw, and flakes of snow came driving along on the wind, when, after having treated me with unusual severity during the day, the old woman dismissed me to one of the principal squares, and forbade me to return until I had obtained ten *sous*.

"I took a little paper lantern, lighted by a bit of tallow candle, to guide my steps through the dark and lonely streets, and went to the square. I had been there sometime, and had collected but five *sous*, from the unwilling charity of the passers-by; some of them, when I timidly asked them for a *sou*, looked at me harshly, and passed on, making me no reply; others gave it me in a contemptuous manner; and one woman, as she swept past me, her long robe trailing the pavement, remarked how absurd it was for the police to allow pauper children to annoy people by their importunity. I felt so degraded and unhappy, that unconsciously the bitter tears ran down my cheeks, and leaning my head upon my arm, which rested on one of the iron seats of the piazza, I wept bitterly; I longed to go home, but I dreaded the severe punishment which I knew awaited me, if I did not return with ten *sous*.

"I heard heavy steps coming up the gravel walk, and rose upon my feet; it was a tall, stout man, enveloped in a large cloak; I could not see his face; my little lantern was extinguished, and the moon had hidden herself beneath the snowy clouds. I extended one of my cold little hands, and falteringly asked him for a *sou*.

"'I haven't a single *sou* about me, my little one,' he replied, in a rough, kind voice, 'nothing but a bank note.'

"He was about passing on, when trembling and animated by a sort of desperation, I seized his cloak with both hands, and was beginning to entreat him once more, when tears choked my utterance, and I sobbed piteously; the man seemed touched by my grief, he stopped, and raising me off the ground, exclaimed jocosely,

"'What, all this weeping about one *sou*, come with me across the piazza, and I'll get a bill changed and give you a hundred, if that will dry your tears, poor little one;' and then, inquiring, 'In what part of the town do you live, and who is it that sends you out such cold, stormy nights as this, to beg; have you a father or mother?'

"'No sir.'

"'Who takes care of you?'

"'An old woman.'

"'Is she kind to you?'

"'No; she sends me out to beg, and beats and abuses me, if I don't bring her as many *sous* as she bids me bring.'

"'Why don't you run away?'

"'I can't: there's nobody to take care of me if I did.'

"'Come with me, and let me see how you look.' He took my hand, cast his ample cloak around my shivering shoulders, and I walked by his side to a small fancy shop, the other side of the square. He began singing an air as he walked along; it sounded perfectly celestial to my ears.

"A pretty girl stood behind the counter, serving customers; she looked like an angel to me then; and I thought that poor little shop must certainly contain every beautiful thing on the face of the earth. After getting a bank note changed, my new friend pushed back my matted hair from my face, and attentively surveyed me from head to foot. I now saw *his* face; he was a tall, well made man, and his countenance bore a good-humored expression; the result of his investigations seemed satisfactory; for, turning to the shop girl, he said to her:

"'Mademoiselle Marie, can you oblige me by having this child's face and hands washed clean?' and pointing to a child's dress of blue merino, hanging on the wall; 'fit her, if you please, with a robe of that description, with suitable clothing, and I will pay whatever you may charge.' The young girl looked astonished at this; but her amazement in no way equalled mine. To be presented with, what appeared to me, a princely gift, from an utter stranger, seemed too beautiful to be true. I imagined he must be my guardian angel, who had assumed humanity to watch over me; I was too young to perceive that the man had any *motive* in doing this benevolent action.

"I followed the girl, whom he called Mademoiselle Marie, to a small, neat chamber up stairs; where by dint of perseverance, and some strength, she succeeded in restoring my face, neck and hands, to their original color; she then took a comb and smoothed my tangled locks, put clean shoes and stockings on my feet, clean under-clothing, and lastly, the pretty dress. I walked across the room to a large mirror, and struck with astonishment, contemplated my metamorphosis. I beheld a tall, slender child, with an oval face, whose large blue eyes and auburn hair, gave a pensive expression to the countenance; my complexion would have been a delicate white, had it not been turned by constant exposure to the sun. Was it possible that this interesting child was myself? I concluded it must be an agreeable dream.

"Mademoiselle led me down stairs again, to my new protector. 'She looks much better now, sir; don't you think so, now she's dressed nice and clean?'

"'Wonderful,' cried my new friend, 'I should scarcely know her. Now, my child, I'll tell you why I give you this pretty dress; I want you to leave the old woman who has you now, and come with me and learn to be an actress; would you not like to be a great actress, rather than beg in the streets?'

"'I don't like to ask money of people; I don't like that way of living at all; but I don't know what you mean by an actress; what do they do?'

"'Poor child,' ejaculated Mademoiselle, 'how dreadfully ignorant.'

"'Oh, it is the most charming life in the world; perfectly delightful; you may yet become a great actress, and a happy woman.'

"I could neither appreciate, not understand what greatness was; but I felt a vague comprehension of the word happy, for I had never been anything but unhappy. After paying for my new clothes, my protector asked me to show him the house where I lived. I dreaded to return to the old woman, lest she should deprive me of my new clothes, and replace them with rags; I, therefore, earnestly begged him not to take me back to her; told him she would beat and abuse me, and take away my clothes; he laughed.

"'Do you suppose,' he answered, 'that I care for an old hob-goblin witch. I am merely going to see how much she will sell you for, and relinquish all future right to your person; were I to take you without doing so, she might trouble me hereafter.'

"'Oh, I don't want to be sold for a slave,' I cried; struck with a sudden fear, that perhaps he intended to make some kind of merchandise of me.

"'A slave, my child; I have no intention of making a slave of you, or any one else I know of, at present. You don't understand, my little one; therefore show me the way, and be silent.

"I led him to the old woman's house; she did not recognise me at first, as I entered, followed by the man, and placed her withered hand over her eyes, to shade the sudden light, and distinguish who I was; for my companion carried a large lantern in his hand, which he raised high above my head, as he came in behind me.

"'It's you, is it, you little devil; where have you been so long? where did you get those new clothes; you stole them, didn't you? I know you did; oh, I'll beat you, I'll beat you.'

"She started, when she perceived my protector, who quietly closed the door, and came toward her.

"'What do you want here, fellow?' she sharply demanded; 'what are you doing alone at night with my girl? I sent her out to beg, and you bring her back to me with fine clothes on; she shan't keep them; I'll strip her of every piece; she shall be a beggar, a hag like I am.'

"'Look here, my good woman,' said the man, in a low quiet tone; 'look me straight in the face, and let us talk quietly.' She obeyed; and taking her pipe from her mouth, fixed her gaggle green eyes on his. His cool determined manner seemed to exercise a novel influence upon her unsettled mind.

"'This poor girl can be of little use to you; I should think, on the contrary, she would be in your way?"

"'Oh, yes, she's a deal of trouble to me; so bad, I can't—' She left the sentence unfinished, and began smoking her pipe again, as she bent over the fire.

"'I've taken a fancy to the child,' he continued, 'and came back with her to-night, to offer you whatever sum you should ask, if you would give her to me; I wish to bring her up, and educate her to the stage.'

"'It's satan's own home; no, I'll never consent that she shall be made an actress. I mean to bring her up as I was brought up, to be a wandering gipsy girl.'

"'She is not your child, that is quite certain?'

"'No, she is not mine.'

"'How did you obtain her? did you steal her?'

"'I shall not tell you.'

"He took a purse of gold from his pocket, and shook it between his hands; the old woman eyed it eagerly; 'come my good woman, you had better consent to let me have the child; you may one day have

the satisfaction of seeing her a distinguished woman, and of knowing that it is the same being you once took care of.'

"'Great satisfaction will it be to me, when I shall be rotting in a pauper's grave; and great gratitude will she owe me for the kicks and cuffs I've given her.' The old woman laughed, a sneering, devilish laugh. 'No,' she continued in a low muttering tone, as if to herself; 'my sand is nearly run, almost gone; I see it in the embers; I feel it in my bones. What difference does it make when you're dead, whether you're buried in the ground, or burnt up? I'd as soon have a hole in the ground, as a fine tomb.'

"During this dialogue I had remained silent, in a distant corner of the room. The fitful gleams from the decaying fire, and the muffled light of the lantern, partially illumined this witch-like apartment, and cast fantastic shadows along the wall; in one corner was thrown a straw bed, upon which the old woman slept; a table, two or three ricketty chairs and a few pieces of broken crockery, constituted its sole furniture; a ladder, placed against the wall, led to my sleeping place, to which I nightly ascended through a hole in the ceiling. At length, arousing herself from her reverie, she said,

"'You may have the girl for ten louis; if you'll give me that, you may have her.'

"'Will you sign a paper I shall draw up; promising never to seek to see her, or speak to her after she leaves you, as I wish to change her turn of mind, and teach her better things.'

"'Oh, yes; the girl hates me, and what should we want to see each other for. As for me, I hate the whole world; yes, I hate it, I have had my revenge; I have robbed, I have stole, and begged; and steal and beg I always will, until I'm put in the ground. The world owes me a living for the troubles I've had. No, I shall never want to see her again, if she leaves me.'

"In the meantime, my new friend took a piece of paper from his pocket, and wrote something upon it in pencil mark. I did not even know my alphabet then; it is therefore impossible for me to say what were the contents of that paper. I presume it was merely a legal technicality, transfering all her rights over to himself. When he had finished, he handed it to her to sign.

"'I can't write,' said she, 'but I'll make my mark.'

"'Well, make a cross, that will do.' She obeyed, and scrawled two lines across each other; he took the paper from her hand, and put it in his pocket-book; then counted ten louis from his purse, and placed them in her withered claws. She carefully counted them over

after him, and being satisfied that the number was correct, deposited the money in a piece of rag, torn off one of her garments, tied a string around it, and laid it in her bosom.

"The man rose, and gathered his cloak around him.

"'Come my child, my business with her is done; let us depart.'

"Strange anomaly in human nature; I, who one hour previous had desired nothing so earnestly as to leave this wretched hag, now, on being offered an opportunity of leaving, even for a new bright home, felt an undefined sentiment of regret at doing so; perhaps it was the result of old associations and habits, which we all of us, more or less, find difficult to shake off.

"I timidly advanced toward her, to say farewell, for I had ever stood in awe of her violence, and savage nature; but she sullenly turned her back upon both him and me, and began chanting, with her eyes fixed on vacancy.

"'You need not take the trouble of saying good bye, child,' remarked my self-appointed guardian, as he pushed open the latchless door—'she wouldn't care a farthing if you were to die to-night. Come, little one, are you ready?' I took one hand; he grasped the lantern with the other; she did not turn her face toward me as I went out. When my feet left the threshold of that hut, I bade adieu to beggary forever, and entered upon a new career in life.

"I felt shy, and almost afraid, as I walked quickly along to keep pace with him; for now that all ties were forever severed between old Granny (as I was wont to call her) and myself, I looked upon him as my saviour and protector; he traversed many streets, turning now to the right, now to the left, in parts of the city where I had never been before; I wished he had taken me back to the little shop and Mademoiselle Marie, but we went nowhere in the direction of the piazza. At length, he stopped before some building, and knocked at the door; I could not judge of the size of the house, or its appearance, the night was too dark; the door was opened by a male servant, holding a heavy silver candlestick, with a wax candle in it, in his hand; my protector said something to him, in a language I did not understand, and the man shut the door after him, and removed his cloak from his shoulders. I now saw, by the light of a large globe lamp suspended from the ceiling, that we stood in a spacious hall, or vestibule, off which opened on either side beautifully carved, mahogany doors; from the farther end ascended a lofty stair-case. My new friend opened one of these doors, and I followed him into an elegant apartment, where a bright coal fire burned cheerfully in the grate; the walls

were hung with costly paintings and mirrors; numerous instruments of music lay scattered round. Such a place I had never seen, scarcely even dreamed of; surely this must be fairy land.

"'Now child,' said my friend, as he rolled a costly arm-chair before the fire, and seated himself in it, 'you must be hungry; have you had anything to eat to-day?'

"'Only a crust of bread this morning, sir.'

"'Well, you shall have some supper, and then go to bed, and to-morrow we will talk of your future prospects.'

"I had no idea of what 'future prospects' meant; but the idea of getting something to eat delighted me; he rang a bell, and when the same domestic answered the summons, who had opened the door for us, he again spoke to him in the same unknown tongue. It was not German, or rather a degenerate dialect I had always been accustomed to hear; it was a softer, a more liquid language; he told me, in German, to go with the man, whom he called Jean, and he would give me my supper, and if I wanted anything to address him in German, and he would understand me.

"I followed Jean across the hall to an immense room, opposite the drawing-room, extending the whole length of the house, beautifully carpeted with Brussels; while up and down the apartment, on either side, were placed stationary seats of scarlet velvet, fixed to the wall; a magnificent chandelier hung from the ceiling; eight large windows on each side, set with mirror plate, reflected and multiplied every object in this handsome and commodious saloon.

"In a distant corner stood a small table, set with supper for two persons, all sorts of cakes, preserves, dried fruit, and bread; on a side table sat two silver urns, one containing coffee, the other tea; a warm, delightful heat seemed to pervade the room; but I saw no fire, and could not imagine whence it came; the atmosphere of peace and repose, which seemed to reign within this house, so different to the scenes of strife and destitution, to which I had alone been accustomed, shed a soothing influence upon my mind. In the course of the last three hours, I had thought more than I ever had during my whole dark, blank existence.

"Jean waited on me, while I ate ravenously. A comfortable meal was something I had never enjoyed before; it is not, therefore, astonishing that I was attentive to its merits; my usual repast had generally been a few crusts of dry bread, sometimes the old woman gave me a bit of tough meat, frequently tainted; this constituted my ordinary fare; yet, I was then healthy and cheerful, notwithstanding my disconsolate

condition. I did not know for what purpose this man had taken me from the street, this dark, tempestuous night, and placed me in so splendid a home; had I been older, and wiser, I should naturally have suspected that he had *some* motive or object in this strange act of benevolence; as it was, I enjoyed, with a keen sense of pleasure, the fine supper, and many glittering objects I saw around me, without thinking, knowing, or caring, what became of me hereafter. When I had finished supper, Jean reconducted me to my protector, who still sat by the fire reading a newspaper; he asked me if I had had supper enough; and upon my answering in the affirmative, and gratefully thanking him for his kindness, he took me up stairs to a little room in the second story, where he gave me in charge to a neat-looking woman, dressed in black, with a white, frilled cap upon her head; after telling her to attend me, and put me to bed, he returned to the drawing-room. It was now past ten o'clock; and, fatigued by the exciting events of the evening, I began to feel stupid and sleepy; the waiting maid undressed me, and after seeing me comfortably wrapped up in bed, left the room, and I fell speedily in a profound slumber.

"The waiting maid, whose name I learned to be Marguerite, came early to dress me; and I found my friend already at his breakfast, in a small breakfast room back of the drawing-room; he drew a chair to the table, told me to help myself, and went on eating and singing at the same time; I needed no second invitation, and complied. When he had completed his breakfast, he leaned back in his chair, and producing a large handkerchief, vigorously rubbed his face; then turning to me, who sat quietly beside him, drinking my coffee, he asked:

"'Did you sleep well last night, child?'

"'Yes sir, very comfortably indeed.'

"'It is awkward speaking to you, without calling you by name; by what name did that old woman call you?'

"'I don't know that I ever had a name. Granny used to call me Nancy.'

"'Nancy, that sounds harsh, I don't like it;' he seemed to think a minute, and then said,

"'Genevra is a pretty name: I will call you that, since you are unprovided with one; hereafter, remember to answer to the name of Genevra.'

"'Yes sir, I will.'

"'Now come here, and sit upon my knee; I want to tell you what I intend doing for you.' I obeyed, and he placed me on his knee.

"'Now, Genevra, I call you by your right name; you remember

hearing me say last night to that old woman, that I intended educating you for the stage, if I took you from her; you are too young yet to know what that means, but you will learn in time. I have already adopted two little girls, situated much as you were, and mean to educate them also as actresses. I hope time will show that you possess a tractable disposition, and sweet temper, without which no accomplishments can be of advantage to you. You are to be placed at the same school with these girls, who will, doubtless, be friends and companions to you in your studies; in the course of five or six years, if you live, you will be prepared, by dint of hard study and application, to make your *debut.*'

"One half of these remarks I had not understood; I only comprehended, that I was required to perform something very difficult to be done; I presumed a sort of punishment, which was to prepare me for some future eclat; but after having experienced so much of destitution, slight privations seemed light as air, and I joyfully welcomed the idea of, as I thought, going to work.

"He told me to run up stairs, and ask Marguerite to find me some sort of hood, or bonnet, to wear out in the street. After an active search, she at length discovered a gingham hood, which I hastily tied on, and ran back to my protector; he took my hand, and we passed out into the street; it was a fine clear day, I remember; the sun shone bright, although the air was somewhat cold; how different I felt in spirit, as I gayly trotted along by his side; I did not feel the same acute sense of degradation I had always felt with that depraved old hag; the happy buoyant sense of being, which is the principal of happiness in youth, was gradually springing up again in my heart, which had been, as it were, stunted and depressed, by a malevolent genius.

"At a short distance from his own house, he stopped before a gloomy looking dwelling, chequered alternately on the front, with red and black brick; he knocked at a large gate, which seemed to form the only mode of entrance to this convent-like abode; it was slowly unbarred and opened by a stout german woman, dressed in the usual style of the peasantry; my friend passed her without remark, and we ascended a heavy stone stair-case, which wound upward from the court-yard; at the first landing place he led me into a large parlor, furnished plainly, but tastefully; the floor was uncarpeted, but waxed and rubbed till it shone, and reflected every object like a mirror; a piano stood in one corner, and all the chairs were covered with cushions, elegantly embroidered in German worsted; two sofas were also orna-

mented with the same beautiful work; there was no fire in the grate, however, and the room had a cold, comfortless air about it; one mirror, inserted between the windows, and opposite the door, as we entered, afforded me a full length view of myself, and I started with astonishment at seeing the pretty form reflected there; very different did it look from the ragged, dirty child, I was accustomed to see reflected in the shop windows as I passed.

"We had been seated scarcely a moment, when the door opened, and a small thin woman, with a sharp, bright expression of face, wearing a calico dress, and wrapped in a red shawl, came tripping in; they spoke together for some time, in the same unintelligible language I had heard the night before; at length, turning to me, the lady said in German, 'So my dear, you are to be a pupil of mine, I hear; I trust I shall find you obedient and diligent.' They resumed their conversation, while I sat quietly by the side of my new-found guardian; holding his hand in mine, for I felt sad, at thus being obliged so soon to part from him. I heard the sound of mirthful laughter, and noisy whispering, which seemed to be in the vicinity of the parlor, and looking down the stone-paved gallery, I saw at its farthest extremity a door open, and within the room many young girls seated at desks, studying. The house, in its architecture, resembled more one of those old gothic cathedrals, I have since seen in my travels, than anything else I can compare it to; it was lofty, antique, and gloomy, one almost felt like the ghosts themselves, as one walked through its stone galleries, and heard one's steps resound with a hollow echo.

"When my guardian and the lady had finished their conference, which lasted more than half an hour, he took his hat, preparatory to departure. At the idea of losing this kind man, and being left in a strange house, to form acquaintances with people whom I neither knew, nor cared for, I burst into tears; the lady endeavored to console me, patting me on the head, telling me I should be her little favorite, and she was sure I would be contented and happy. Monsieur Belmont (I heard her call him so) shook me repeatedly by the hand, saying he should see me regularly twice a week; that I must obey Madame Deville in all things, and study hard, that I might become an accomplished girl.

"'I have no doubt she will be both happy and satisfied, when she becomes a little accustomed to the pupils and myself,' observed Madame to Monsieur Belmont, as she stood beside me, pressing my hand in hers.

"'I hope so,' was his reply, 'it will be at least three months, I pre-

sume, before I can begin to give her instruction in music, she is so totally uninformed.'

"'Oh yes,' cried she, with the sharp, quick intonation of a French woman: 'it will require at least that length of time to instruct her in the rudiments; I shall try and do my best, Monsieur, I assure you, with your protege; before you go, would you not like to have Inez and Blanche called from the school-room, that they may be introduced to their future companion?'

"'Yes,' answered Monsieur, 'if it is convenient, I should like to see them.'

Madame rang a small bell, which stood on a table beside her; a moment after, a tall mulatto made his appearance. I had never seen any of the negro race before, and was much astonished at, what I considered, the odd color of his skin; he received her message, delivered to him in French, and directed his steps toward the room at the end of the gallery, from which he returned in a few minutes, leading by the hand two young girls, both older than I; the one a brunette, the other a blonde; their manner was lady-like, gentle, and winning. Inez's hair was raven black, her eyes large, voluptuous, and star-like in their expression; Blanche, on the contrary, was timid as a fawn, in her look and ways: there was a dreamy languor in her sad blue eyes, which seemed to tell of love's present or future reveries—a love, however, of a more spiritual kind than Inez would ever be capable of feeling; a profusion of pale flaxen hair shaded her sweet face, and hung nearly to her waist in long curls; they were both dressed alike, in frocks of cheap calico; they bowed respectfully to their teacher on entering her parlor, and upon Monsieur Belmont's presenting me to them as one who was to become a companion in their studies, they politely kissed me on each cheek, and bade me welcome to their school. I could not realize, while contemplating the refinement of these two girls, that they had been taken, a few short years before, from the same position in life, from which this philanthropic man had rescued me but one day previous; truly, it is education, and the society in which we mingle, which impress in youth that bias of mind for right or wrong, which only leaves us when life does.

"'You three will occupy the same room,' said Madame. 'I hope you will be good friends. Inez and Blanche soon cultivated a friendship for each other after they came.'

"The tears still flowed from my eyes; my heart in after days, became too hard and dry to allow me to weep often; but then the fount of feeling was a fresh, pure spring, uncontaminated by the mud and

refuse of inferior streams. I often look back, through the heavy mist time has left lowering upon those early days, and regret the loss of those fallacious hopes; those splendid castles built in air, which always crumbled into dust whenever I attempted to approach them.

"Monsieur Belmont, after speaking to Inez and Blanche a moment, in French, shook hands with me, bade me not cry, and departed. Madame Deville reassuming the school-mistress deportment, and her gravity, which had been laid aside to entertain a visitor, led me to the school-room, and the two girls returned to their desks, their silence, and their studies. It was a very large room, lighted by two enormous windows, one at each end; the walls hung, not with superb paintings like Monsieur Belmont's elegant house, but with charts and maps; rows of desks were ranged each side of the apartment, and more than a hundred girls, of all sizes, shapes, and ages, were seated at them, busily engaged in coning over their lessons for recitation. Upon my entrance, being a new scholar, all eyes were bent on me, and a subdued whispering ran through all the ranks of girls. Madame put me at a desk between Inez and Blanche, and then taking her seat upon an elevated dias at the head of the room. She struck her desk with a ruler, and called one of the classes; the girls, who were called loudly, all rose, shut their books, and placed themselves before her in a row. This class was composed of large girls, neatly dressed, some of them were passably pretty; no two in the room, however, could be compared to Inez and Blanche. They all stared at me as they passed; it was a lesson in ancient history they were to recite. Madame taking one of the books in her hand, asked the questions in a loud, clear tone; and the pupils replied, some well, some wrong, according as they had learned their lessons; the recitation ended, Madame marked those who had missed upon a large day-book, which always lay open upon her desk before her. Several smaller classes were heard, and Inez and Blanche left my side for a while, to recite their lessons; then I heard the sound of a deep-toned bell, rung for several minutes: it was now recess for an hour; all the girls clamorously rushed from the school-room, seized their sun-bonnets, and poured themselves into the court-yard. It was a gloomy spot for a play-ground; there were no trees, no flowers, which we are ever wont to associate in mind with children's gambols. Nothing but the square flag-stones, flanked on all four sides, by the brick walls of the house, met my view. Inez and Blanche put up their books, and turning to me, Blanche said, 'Come, Genevra, come with us to the yard, and play hide and seek.' Inez also pressed me to go and play with them, for I felt shy and strange,

and would have preferred remaining where I was. Blanche evidently was a favorite with Madame, for as she went out of the school-room, to rest herself a few minutes in her parlor, before the pupils returned to their studies, she kissed me, saying I must laugh and play, and enjoy myself with the other children; and then said to Blanche, 'Well, my dear, how is that fine soprano voice of yours, have you practiced well this morning? Blanche smilingly replied she had; there was a sweetness about that smile of hers, and an expression of guileless innocence in her lovely eyes, I could never forget.

"How little did we three inexperienced girls imagine what the future had in store for us. Could a magician, at that period of time, have shown us in a magic mirror, our several destinies in life, would we have believed, that the fatal sisters had allotted to us so chequered and sad a career? I am certain *I* would not. How grateful should we be to Divine Providence, that all insight into futurity is forbidden us; how unable would we be to contend with the many trials and difficulties, which constantly assail us in the rough pathway of life; could we foresee the sacrifices which are so frequently demanded of us as we journey on.

"Inez, Blanche, and myself, descended hand-in-hand to the court-yard; the girls were all joyously at play. I always was a grave child; I cared but little for the sports and amusements children so dearly covet, but on this occasion I forgot my usual sadness and joined them in an animated race, which lasted several minutes, when the bell again was rung; and the girls arranging their disordered dresses, and composing their faces, returned to the school-room in pairs, as they had left it.

Order was restored, and the rest of the afternoon spent in recitation and writing; I saw several teachers, whom I had not seen during the morning, having been absent in different parts of the house, giving lessons in music and dancing. They were all thin, and had a starved and hungry look, excepting Miss Jones, a fat, good-humored English teacher. I became quite fond of her during my long residence at the school. I learned from Blanche, that Monsieur Belmont, was a Frenchman, from Paris, manager of the Royal Italian Opera, and considered the most splendid singer in Vienna; he also gave lessons in vocal music to some of the pupils at the school, among whom were Inez and Blanche; the girl dwelt with touching sadness upon the humble condition, from which this kind man had taken both Inez and herself, what advantages of education had been afforded them, and how grateful they felt towards him.

CHAPTER IV.

"Blanche had just finished her little story, related with an air of childish simplicity, which gave infinite interest, when the loud sound of a gun reverberated through the house. I had never heard one then, and imagined it was thunder. Twilight's dusky hue had stolen into the room, before we were aware of its approach. Madame Deville commissioned my future instructor, Madame Schiller, to attend to me, and, following her, we went to the refectory; it was a long, low ceiled, narrow room; two long tables extended almost as far as my eye could reach, covered with snow-white table linen, and scanty portions of bread and butter; a glass of water stood by each plate; weak tea was handed to the teachers, who stood together in a group, apart from the girls, and chatted of their own affairs. I could not help mentally comparing this meagre fare, with the delicacies I had eaten the night before at Monsieur Belmont's. It may seem surprising, that a beggar girl should regret a style of living, of which she had only caught a passing glance; but luxury is infinitely more attractive than want; we sooner become accustomed to it, and lament its loss when deprived of it. Very few would conscientiously prefer, had they their choice, a life of rigorous self-sacrifice, to one of wealth and splendor. It is generally a matter of compulsion and self-love induces us to advocate that which we cannot change.

"An unbroken silence was preserved during the meal; nearly two hundred girls were gathered around the tables; they ate their slices of bread and butter quietly, and scarce a sound was heard in the room, save the whispered conversation of the teachers. At its conclusion, Madame Deville said grace, and we all proceeded up stairs, through a long gallery, paved with stone, as were all the vestibules in the house, to the study room; this was a large apartment, near the dormitories, fitted up in much the same style as the saloon at Monsieur Belmont's; the monthly exhibitions of the pupils, Inez told me, were held here. Every evening, for two hours, the girls studied their lessons for the following day; the two hours seemed an eternity to me, while the scholars industriously applied themselves to their books. Madame sat at the head of the room in a sort of pulpit, and with her finger pressed to her lips, might have passed for the goddess of Wisdom herself.

The expression of her features, when in repose, was somewhat stern, still there was a kindness blended with it, which showed she possessed a benevolent heart. I still think of her with love and respect, although the remembrance of those days is faint and dim. Another bell rang; the movements of the whole household seemed to be regulated by bells; bed-time had arrived; a certain number of girls were allotted to each dormitory, over whom presided one of the teachers. I was to become one of Madame Schiller's little flock. A shrine, tastefully decorated, was placed at the head of each sleeping room, and the ceremony of the office was read every night before the girls retired to rest. Madame Schiller, with her hands clasped, knelt upon the floor, and we all gathered around her; the low and solemn voice with which she read the 'office,' made a deep impression on my mind. Inez and Blanche, with their heads bowed down, devoutly told their beads. The ceremony occupied perhaps half an hour, then the girls hastily undressed themselves, and hurried to bed; the beds were small, but the bedding neat and clean; they were arranged like the desks in the school-room, in two rows each side of the room; mine was next to that of Blanche. I heard Madame ask, 'Are you all in bed, children?' Some one answered 'yes;' she extinguished the lamp, and silence and darkness reigned. I fell asleep and had a singular dream. I thought I saw myself grown to be a woman, a tall handsome woman. I stood upon the deck of a ship, driving furiously before the gale, upon a stormy sea; the dark clouds lowered above my head, the waves ran mountains high: a crowd of helpless frightened beings lay around me. I alone seemed the only one on board this doomed vessel who fearlessly met my fate. We were rushing fast on the rocks off the coast. I stood with my arms folded on the forecastle; onward dashed the ship, the masts shivered to splinters, and sails flying like ribbonds in the wind. As we passed a high black rock, which rose menacingly above our heads, I looked upward, and upon its summit, saw a man, who stood with arms folded like myself, calmly contemplating the unhappy bark. He looked like an angel stationed there, that after the pangs of death were past, he might convey to heaven our souls; instinctively I extended toward him my hands, and cried, 'Save me, oh save me!' He also opened his arms to receive me, and answered, 'Come.' At this moment, the vessel struck the breakers; one wild unearthly yell I heard, and was engulphed amid the waves; I struggled violently, but in vain, to reach the shore; the water filled my mouth and my ears. I was suffocated, and lost my senses. I awoke, covered with a profuse perspiration, trembling with fear; it was not yet day, all was quiet in

the dormitory, every one asleep. I lay still for a few minutes, and gradually realized the conviction, that it was all a dream. I went to sleep again; this time I dreamed nothing, and was awoke by Blanche's hand being laid on mine. Madame was calling the girls; she said it was time to rise. I rose, dressed myself, and washed my face and hands at Blanche's 'toilette,' there being none yet provided for me. When all were dressed, prayers were said. Day had just began to dawn, it was not more than five o'clock, and very cold in the dormitory, sleeping without fire; I felt chilled and stupified by the raw atmosphere; we descended the stairs again, and traversed the long vestibules through which we had ascended the night before; the girls looked almost like shades from the tomb, as they flitted along, and their pattering steps reverberated as they passed.

"They went to the music room, where every morning, from five till seven o'clock, the pupils in music practised in little cabinets, within each of which was placed a piano; a glass window inserted in the door of each room, enabled the teacher to observe whether they were attentive to their duty. Not being a music scholar, I left Inez and Blanche to pursue their practising, and went with Madame Schiller to the school-room; it was dreary and cold. I sat down at my desk, and wished I knew how to read, that I might entertain myself with a book. Several girls were in the room, busily occupied with their lessons; having nothing to do, I leaned my head on my desk and fell into a sort of doze; the time whiled slowly away: at last I was startled by the loud sound of the gong; I started up, sought out my two new friends among the crowd of girls in the gallery, and having found them, went into the refectory to breakfast; the table presented no novelty; the same slices of bread and butter, arranged as I had seen at supper; a cup of weak coffee placed at each plate, instead of the glass of water, constituted the only variation. I tasted mine, it was execrable; yet 'to the hungry man every bitter thing is sweet,' and being hungry myself, I ate my bread and butter, and drank my coffee, without paying much attention to the taste of either; breakfast over, we returned to the school-room, and I took my first lesson in my native tongue, by beginning the alphabet. Madame Schiller was my teacher; Madame Deville was also very attentive; she frequently said many kind, encouraging things to me. I have described the routine of one day, so it was every day, monotonous and regular as the ticking of a clock; at first I thought it inconceivably dull; but gradually becoming accustomed to the school, and being occupied and interested in my own mental culture, Time, which at first dragged wearily along, flew more

rapidly away, and I became happy in my new home. I made several acquaintances among the pupils, and these childish friendships added to my love of the school.

"Two days after my advent at Madame Deville's, a trunk, containing several complete suits of clothing, was sent me, labelled 'Genevra Sfonza,' from Monsieur Belmont; Blanche read the superscription, for I could not; while I, delighted, contemplated the contents of this unexpected gift; how kind, I thought, to send me such pretty clothes; the dresses were of worsted, made high and plain, suitable to the cold season of the year, and my school occupations; how I longed to see my good benefactor, that I might thank him for all his care and attention to me.

"The following day I saw him; he came to give Inez and Blanche their singing lesson; I was called to the music room; I found Monsieur Belmont there, talking to the two girls; they were the only tenants of the room; at seeing me, he extended his arms and smiled; I ran in to them, with the joyful glee of an infant re-united to its parent, for indeed, he seemed to me more like a protector and friend, whom I had known for years, than the self-constituted patron of a beggar-girl. He asked me if I was an attentive, obedient pupil; if Inez, Blanche, and myself were good friends, and if I were happy at the school. To all these questions I most sincerely answered 'yes,' for the few days I had passed there, had been the only happy ones of my whole life.

"'Don't you wish you were far enough advanced in music, to be able to sing with your two friends?' asked Monsieur, as Blanche took her seat at the piano, and arranged her music before her.

"'Indeed, I should like to sing very much; how long will it be before I can begin to learn?'

"'In the course of two or three months, if you are studious;' and he turned his attention to Blanche as she commenced her song. It was a sweet melancholy air from one of the Operas; the words impassioned, and reproachful. The clear, harmonious voice of Blanche, rose gradually from a low, quiet tone, to a wild, bird-like burst of passion. She executed the most difficult passages, with apparently, the greatest ease; higher and higher, rose her tones; then slowly depressing them, they died imperceptibly away. The song had ceased, and I had fallen into a reverie, seated close to the piano, by Monsieur Belmont's side; one might wonder what I could have found to muse about, at that juvenile period of life; but I always was a dreamy child, and still am a dreamy woman, with this difference alone; my dreams now, are sorrowful regrets over the past; then, they were the fanciful

speculations of youth; my visions, then, transported me to some sort of fairy, etherial existence, my spirit seemed to leave my body and rove through infinite space; lovers, or passion, had no share in those dreams of mine. I have since then endeavored, but in vain, to recall those visions of fairyland; time, and the bustle of an active life, have obliterated them from my mind.

"Monsieur praised her improvement, and bade her be diligent at her practising; then Inez came to sing her piece: her voice was a fine, rich contralto, deep and melodious in tone. She sang a bold naval song, with great spirit and effect. The next monthly exhibition was approaching, and all the music pupils were preparing their pieces for the occasion. Inez and Blanche were considered the two best musicians at the institution. Monsieur Belmont advanced them more rapidly, it was said, than he did the other pupils; probably he wished to perfect them more thoroughly for their future debut on the stage.

"Each took a lesson on a new piece, then our teacher departed.

"'Don't you ever get tired of singing and practising, Blanche?' I asked, as she stood leaning thoughtfully against the piano, her eyes downcast, while Inez gazed from the window upon the dreary street below.

"'Sometimes, yes; yet we know it is our duty to obey Monsieur, and if he tells us to practise extra hours, we must do so.'

"'How long do you practise each day?'

"'Four, often five hours.'

"'Oh, that must be very dull!'

"'I am sure I think it is,' exclaimed Inez, who was the most petulent of the two; 'I often wish I were a woman, and an actress; I should at least be my own mistress, and obtaining money for myself; here I have been for the last three, and you for the last two years; the same old monotonous round of school duties to perform every day; no change, no home to go to in vacation, always here. I don't believe I shall ever live to get away; when you have been here as long as we have, you will be tired of it too, Genevra!

"'I don't know; I hardly think I shall grow very tired; I like the school; I love you and Blanche, and I am glad and grateful to have some one to take care of me, and a home to stay in.'

"'In a few years,' said Blanche, 'we shall leave the school, and go out into the great world, to make our own way alone; then, perhaps, we may look back and wish we were at school again.'

"At this moment one of the teachers made her appearance at the door, and called us to our studies. Time passed quietly and regu-

larly on for two weeks; I learned my alphabet, and began to spell in words of two syllables; the girls became used to my appearance, and no longer stared and whispered when they saw me, as girls always do upon the advent of a new scholar at a school. Inez was fourteen, Blanche twelve, and I eight years old. In the course of a year or two, Monsieur Belmont intended withdrawing Inez from Madame Deville's, to teach her the art of acting, preparatory to her entree into the gay world. That world, of which she, nor any of us, as yet knew anything, and from which, in after years, I so often turned away, disgusted with its heartlessness and insincerity, and wished myself buried amid the inaccessible solitudes of Mount Lebanon.

"It wanted but a few days of the monthly 'soiree;' the servants were cleaning and arranging the saloon, where it was to be given. Inez, Blanche, and myself, had been running furious races together during the recess; I felt fatigued, from the violent exercise, and sat down where a strong current of air, from a door, blew full upon me for some minutes; when we returned to our desks in the school-room, my cheeks burnt like fire, and my head felt heavy; I could not take my usual interest in my lesson; for anxious to improve, I diligently applied myself; the letters seemed to turn red, blue, and yellow, and swam before my eyes; late in the afternoon, noticing my languor, as I sat leaning my head on Blanche's shoulder, Madame Deville asked me, if I felt unwell; I answered, 'no, I did not, but my head ached.'

"'You don't look well, my dear; I am afraid you are going to be sick; you must go to the infirmary to-night, and be attended to. Wilhelmina,' addressing a tall, stout, flaxen-haired German girl, 'take Genevra to the infirmary, and tell Miss Jones to attend to her, and put her name on the sick list, at least till to-morrow, when I will see how she is. Go my dear.'

"The infirmary was a large, gloomy room, at the other end of the house, where the pupils were sent, to be nursed, when the least indisposed, if it was only a headache, or ordinary cold, and Madame happened to notice a heavy eye, or listless demeanor, among any of her flock, they were immediately dismissed to the sick room.

"I did not want to go; it was only a slight cold I had taken from over exercise, but Madame's word was law, and must be obeyed, and I, therefore, reluctantly followed my conductress to the infirmary. Wilhelmina repeated her message to Miss Jones, and then returned. Twilight was stealing over that vast city, not the unclouded twilight of a summer's eve, but winter's dusky clouds, mingled with the clear blue of the atmosphere.

"Miss Jones, although English, spoke German well; she asked me if I felt sick, and what ailed me? I replied, 'only a slight headache and vertigo; that I would have remained at my desk, but Madame, imagining I was ill, had told me to come to the infirmary.'

"'Madame is right, of course, my child; for all you know, these may be the premonitory symptoms of a fever,' and Miss Jones, with a learned air, felt my pulse. I could scarcely help smiling at the comical expression of assumed wisdom in the good-natured little woman's face. 'Your head is hot,' placing her hand upon my head, 'and your eyes look heavy; sit down quietly here; the doctor is coming soon, to prescribe for Miss Clarendon, and then I'll ask him what I shall do for you?'

"The little woman bustled about the room awhile, and then went out to order some gruel made for one of the sick girls. I sat still, where she had left me, in an arm-chair, near the window, and looked around the room. Some half dozen girls were its occupants, all sick, and with the exception of one, all in bed; my eyes dwelt more particularly upon her than any other, being the most beautiful and conspicuous one among the invalids, it was the young girl the teacher had called Miss Clarendon. I afterwards learned from one of the pupils, that she was the daughter of a widowed English nobleman, who had placed her at the institution to complete her education, while he pursued his travels alone in the East. She sat in a large fauteuil, nearly opposite me, on the other side of the room; her whole person, except her etherial looking face, enveloped in an enormous cashmere shawl. Her maid, a mulatto woman, stood by her, bathing her pale face with eau de Cologne; her large blue eyes, heavy and listless from ill health, and probably low spirits, were gazing on vacancy; a slight, bright tinge of pink illumined each cheek, and gave a brilliant expression of evanescent bloom to the countenance of this dying beauty.

"For dying she evidently was, of that most insidious and deceptive of all diseases, consumption; far away from the home and associations of her childhood,—alone, in a land of strangers. I thought, while looking at her, that I had never seen any one half as lovely. Inez and Blanche were beautiful, but they were not to be compared to her; they did not possess that elegant bearing, that innate consciousness of superiority, which showed itself in the very looks of this girl. She looked so calm, so lady-like; at intervals she pressed one of her small, delicate hands to her mouth, as if to stifle the hacking cough, which seemed to convulse her frame. Her attendant offered her a lozenge; she took it mechanically, put it in her mouth, and still gazed on. I

walked across the room and took a seat near her; she looked at me languidly, but made no remark.

"'Are you sick, Miss?' I asked, curiously, for I wanted to hear her speak. 'Are you one of Madame Deville's pupils? I have not seen you before.'

"'You are a new pupil, I suppose, and I have been sick for many weeks,' she replied, in intelligible German, but with a marked English accent; her voice was sweet, and intonation very clear. 'Are you on the sick list?' she asked.

"'Yes, Madame says so; she sent me here because I had a bad headache and vertigo, but I don't like the room, it's so still and gloomy.'

"'I wish I had nothing but a headache, I should not complain of the gloomy room.' Tears started in those soft blue eyes, and ran down her cheeks. 'Oh my father,' she murmured in broken tones, 'if you only knew how desolate and lonely I am, I am sure you would come to me.'

"'Don't cry,' I exclaimed, moved at her grief, and wishing to console her, 'I am sure you'll get well yet.'

"'Go away, child, you worry me; you cannot bring me what I long for, my dear father.'

"'Where is your father, is he very far from here? why don't he come to see you, when you want to see him?'

"'He don't know that I am ill, that I am dying; if he did, oh how quickly would he fly to me.'

"'Why don't you write to him, and ask him to take you away from the school?'

"'I have written several times, but I know my letters are never sent, if they had been, he would have been here long ago; I know I shall die soon; it is now two years since father placed me here, and I have been sick for more than a year. He went to Greece and Sicily. Oh, how I wish I were with him. It must be a dreadful thing to die,' she continued, after a moment's pause; 'did you ever think about dying, child?'

"'No, I never thought much about it; I always thought about being happy, and wished to be so.'

"'At home in dear England, I was happy, with all dear friends around us; but to be ill in a strange country, among people I care nothing about, and who care nothing for me, oh how dreadful it is.' She hid her face in her hands, and sighed, and sobbed. I wished I had been better acquainted with her, I would have thrown my arms

around her neck, and kissed her, but I did not like to take such a liberty with an utter stranger. Miss Jones stole suddenly upon us, followed by the physician, and I glided back to my former position. He talked for sometime to Miss Clarendon in a low voice, and she replied in the same subdued tone; I could not catch any of their conversation. Then he passed to the bedsides of some of the other invalids, and paused for some time at that of a little girl, who was raving deliriously with typhus fever; her little hands lay outside the coverlid, and she sometimes clasped them frantically above her head, and demanded her golden crown. Poor little innocent, I hope she obtained it in a better, brighter sphere; for, a few days after, I saw the same slight form arrayed in its grave clothes, and she was borne to her last and silent resting place.

"The physician prescribed for me abstinence for twenty-four hours, and a dose of Epsom salts, both of which recipes I considered entirely unnecessary, as fasting was a virtue which we, from necessity, were constantly obliged to practise, and as for the salts, I really did not need it. It was now quite dark, and two lamps, shedding a dim light, were placed by the nurse on tables at either end of the room. I saw the young English girl undress, and her servant assisted her into bed; she coughed continually, and the traces of tears were still on her cheeks; how sorry I felt for her, if I had been a carrier-pigeon, how willingly would I have flown to Sicily, or anywhere on earth, to have told that beloved parent of her sad condition, and restored him to her.

"I was permitted to remain up an hour longer, as it was only seven o'clock; my head still felt heavy, and objects seemed to swim before my eyes; in the background of the room, the nurse, in her austere dress of black, stood by the side of one of the patients, pouring some drops of liquid into a spoon, while the faithful mulatto, seated in a chair at the bedhead, watched the uneasy slumber of her beautiful mistress; Miss Jones walked quietly backward and forward. As I grew older, and became more capable of observation and reflection, I often wondered how those poor teachers managed to support life, dragging on from days to months, from months to years, their monotonous, stupid existence: no prospect of brighter days dawning on the future, nothing but a continual repetition of school duties, repeated to an infinitude of times; habit, however, becomes second nature, and constant occupation frequently prevents us from dwelling with too much sensitiveness on personal misfortunes.

"After taking the medicine, a gentle, soothing influence came over me, and I dropped asleep in my chair. I awoke during the night, I

was still in the same position. Miss Jones had left the room, and the nurse slumbered with her head leaning on a table; I felt benumbed from my erect attitude, but sleep again overpowered me, and daylight found me locked in the arms of Morpheus. I don't remember what happened afterward; for nine days I lay deliriously tossing on a sick bed, with an attack of fever; at the end of that time I began slowly to recover. Inez and Blanche, my beloved little friends, spent every moment they could snatch from their studies by my side, telling me stories to amuse me, and exercising their ingenuity in a thousand artless ways, to beguile away the tedious hours of convalescence. Madame Deville and Monsieur Belmont, during my illness, had often visited my bedside; they said he had been apprehensive lest my disease should prove mortal. Madame, in her bustling, active way, came every day to the infirmary, encouraged the sick ones, ordered what she thought proper for them, and then bustled away again; there was no difference in her manner toward either rich or poor girls: all were treated alike. I loved her for that trait of character; she only showed perhaps, a slight partiality in favor of those who made the most rapid progress in their studies. This induced the pupils to emulate each other in improvement, that they might deserve the approbation of their directress. When I was sufficiently recovered to observe what was passing around me, I looked for Miss Clarendon, but she was no longer in the room; Inez told me she was a parlor boarder, and had gone to Madame Deville's private parlor, where she took private lessons, and amused herself as she chose; she spoke of her sweet disposition, and various accomplishments, and said that she was generally beloved by all who knew her in the school.

"It was a week after the fever had left me, before I was able to return to the school-room; when I did so, Madame Schiller, and several of my new acquaintances greeted me as if I had been an old friend; after that I applied myself with energy and perseverance, and my improvement was rapid. At the expiration of three months, Monsieur Belmont began instructing me in vocal music; time, and intense assiduity at practising, slowly developed my voice; he was a kind, but a severe and exacting master; he obliged us to perform our allotted tasks, with punctuality and exactness; if we did them well, he praised us quietly, but even slight commendation from his lips was very gratifying.

"The musical soiree had occurred during my illness. Inez and Blanche, I was told, had sung charmingly. Poor little girls! the momentary praise bestowed at a school exhibition, but poorly repaid them

for the many hours of labor spent in acquiring those bird-like tones. Several months elapsed before I was sufficiently advanced in music, to be able to sing at one of Madame's 'evenings.'

"One morning I was directing my steps toward the music room, to practise my lesson, when I saw Miss Clarendon come running down the gallery, and with a wild, passionate expression of joy and surprise, threw herself into the out-spread arms of a grave, elegant looking man, who stood quietly awaiting her approach.

"'Oh my dear father!' she wildly exclaimed, as she impressed kiss after kiss on his lips and forehead, 'you have come at last to see your poor sick child: I had expected to die without ever seeing you again.'

"'You had expected to die! my darling child, what do you mean? I have only this morning arrived from Greece: I have come to take you home to England. Why do you speak in this sad way? Have you not been happy here?'

"'I have been ill for several months,' she sadly replied; 'the doctor says I have consumption; I have been so unhappy, too, away from you. How happy I feel to be with you again, dear father!'

"The gentleman fondly stroked his daughter's silky hair, and gazed with paternal fondness upon that grief-worn, delicate countenance. She now seemed happy and at rest, by the side of that parent, for whose presence she had longed so earnestly; the surprise and pleasure of this re-union, had lit up her face with an expression of feverish joy almost unearthly. I remained a moment at the door of my cabinet and looked at them.

"'You are really going to take me away from here, are you not, dear father? we shall return to dear old England.'

"'Yes, my beloved child, you shall go with me; could I have foreseen your ill health and unhappiness, I never would have left you; I have been thinking of you, my love, during my whole journey, in Athens, at Mount Etna, everywhere you were constantly in my thoughts.'

"'I wish I could have ascended Mount Etna with you: how I should like to see it.'

"'It would have been too tiresome a journey for you, my darling; now go and pack up your clothing, while I speak to Madame Deville before our departure.'

"He went into Madame's parlor, and his daughter walked toward the staircase with a quick light step; she was going to leave the school; in all probability I should never see her again: I was determined to say farewell, and, therefore, ran after her.

"'Are you going away, are you going to leave us, Miss Clarendon?'

"She stopped and looked around; her face brightened with a sweet smile, when she saw it was I who spoke to her. 'Yes, Genevra, I am about leaving you; my dear father has come to take me home to England?'

"'Are you very glad to leave the school?'

"Yes, I am glad, because I am going to see many beloved friends, and because I have suffered much since I have been here from ill health; but I regret losing some of my school companions, and among them is yourself; when I am gone, you must sometimes think of me, Genevra, and keep this in remembranee of me.'

"She gently placed a small gold ring upon my finger, kissed me, and then ran up stairs; I watched her till she disappeared, and then returned to my piano, with the saddening reflection that we should never meet again.

"An hour afterward I saw, from the window of the music-room, a dark blue barouche, drawn by four dapple gray horses, standing before the entrance to the seminary. Lord Clarendon was buttoning up his great-coat, and speaking to a servant, while a liveried footman assisted the young lady into the carriage, presently the gentleman followed also. As the equipage whirled away, she glanced up at the house, and observing me at the window, bowed, and waved her small white hand; they were quickly out of sight. The recollection of that sweet young lady remained fresh in my memory for years; I often wondered whether she ever lived to reach England, or whether death's iron grasp had seized her in a strange land, and I often wished to see her, but my wish was never gratified.

"Two years glided away: Inez had become a beautiful blossom; Blanche was yet but a half-blown bud; I was a tall, slender child. During this length of time I had made quiet, but steady progress in English, French, and Italian, together with my native language; I had gained the love of my preceptors, and I was happy, because I was occupied. We had become a happy trio of firm friends, and notwithstanding women seldom agree, we continued, from first to last, devotedly attached to each other. It was, perhaps, my first grief of the heart, when Inez was withdrawn by Monsieur Belmont from the school. True, I had suffered many privations in early childhood, but they affected more my physical than mental system; moreover the uncultivated mind of a child is incapable of reflection; but now, from the beneficient influence of education, I could think—in after years, I learned to reason too. Blanche and myself dwelt with sentiments of regret upon our approaching separation from Inez; we seemed to love her more, now she was about to part from us. I presume it was the

perversity of human nature, which enhances the value of those objects we are about to lose.

"It was the morning of her departure. Inez stood with her shawl and bonnet on, in our preceptress' parlor; Madame was also there, conversing, and gesticulating with French vivacity to Monsieur. Inez had bidden farewell to all her acquaintances, and tears dropped heavily from her large black eyes. It was a lovely summer day; I heard the chirping of the birds; the sun shone brilliantly; all nature seemed to wear a gala dress; we kissed her in silence, and stood by her, each pressing one of her hands in ours.

"'So, children, you are about to be separated,' cried our mutual master; 'you all look very sad about it, but Inez will be very happy, I know, when she becomes a gay woman of the world; with her splendid voice, she will make a sensation, and a fortune too. As for you, you will soon forget your grief. Blanche's turn will come next, and then you will be left alone, Genevra.'

"'Yes, sir, I know it,' I mechanically replied, for I was thinking of Inez.

"'Genevra has improved much in looks of late. Do you not think so, Madame?' asked the gentleman.

"'Yes,' answered she, glancing at me momentarily. 'I always thought her a pretty child; she is obedient and polite, and very studious; but all the pupils look better in warm weather, than during the cold inclement season of the year; they will miss their schoolmate at first, I suppose, but then they will soon grow reconciled to her absence, for children soon forget.'

"Time demonstrated to me the truth of Madame's observation, that children, and sometimes men and women, 'soon forget.' Oh, beloved companions of my childhood! how often have my thoughts reverted to the innocent hours of pleasure, passed at that school. Where are now the brilliant anticipations of the future? where are the devoted lovers, the unfailing friends we fondly pictured to ourselves? Alas! like the shades of Ossian's heroes, they have faded into air, thin air.

"Our adieus to Inez were weepingly paid, and we saw her depart with our teacher; he promised to send us an account of her debut, and kept his word. A few months subsequently a literary Gazette was sent to Madame, who, after reading it, showed it to us; a paragraph, marked with ink, indicated an eulogium upon the personal appearance, and exquisite voice, of the beautiful young cantatrice, Mademoiselle Inez Fontana. She had made her debut at Berlin: this was a Berlin newspaper. How delighted she must feel at her triumph. For

the first time, it occurred to me that it must be a fine thing to have the world's applause. Blanche and myself were pleased at her success; almost as well pleased as we would have been at our own. One is generally gratified at hearing of a friend's celebrity; it flatters our self-love, since it is *our* friend who has obtained renown.

"The days and weeks, and months, still sped onward. At first, the loss of Inez seemed almost irreparable; in all our amusements we had always formed a little party among ourselves, now our 'set' was broken, and we missed her joyous ways; different to my beloved, confiding Blanche; she was apparently more impassioned, but in reality less so; there was an under-current of strong, deep feeling, in the disposition and character of my fair-haired favorite, her more volatile companion never possessed.

"At length Blanche also was removed by M. Belmont, and I was left alone; rumors of her success, and of the popularity Inez had acquired, often reached me in my retirement from the busy scenes, in which they now occupied so conspicuous a position, and I felt happy in knowing that they were admired; and morning and evening, when I knelt in prayer, with my heart filled with devotion towards that one all-wise, all-creative Influence, I never failed to breathe a prayer for their future happiness and prosperity.

"My own turn came next, four years after; the time had dragged along drearily since the departure of my two friends, and I longed to go; eight years had now elapsed since my advent at the institution. I had perfected myself in three languages, all of which I could speak fluently, and translate well. Madame Deville, and dear Madame Schiller, were both tenderly attached to me, and I bore toward each the most respectful regard.

"'I trust, my dear Genevra,' said Madame Deville to me one day, as I sat in her room, making for her some wax flowers; 'now that you are about to be removed from my protection, I most fervently trust that you will ever bear in mind the principles of integrity and truth, with which I have ever endeavored to inspire you; and never, I beg of you, allow yourself to be deceived by the skilful tongue of flattery. A beautiful actress is invariably exposed to many temptations, which other women, occupying a more private position in life, are seldom subjected to; you possess accomplishments, and personal attractions, which will procure you the admiration of men, and the envy of women; but if you pursue a virtuous course in life, and place your trust in God, I doubt not you will be rewarded.'

"'I hope I shall ever remain true to the principles of honor and virtue,

which have been taught me by you, Madame, since I have been your pupil,' I responded. I admired and respected my good preceptress; but her knowledge of life had been circumscribed, during twenty-five years, to the narrow limits of her school. She drew her conclusions of what the world ought to be from her own thoughts, and she supposed that honesty and virtue are ever rewarded, because she had read in some half-dozen moral novels I had seen her peruse, that such was the case. Had she mingled in the gay vortex of society, she would have seen that unblushing assurance, combined with knavery, passes with the multitude for genuine talent; that unassuming merit is never appreciated, and generally descends to the tomb unsought for, and unknown. All these things I learned from experience; a harsh, yet at the same time a just master; the only one, perhaps, who can practically convince us of the truth of an hypothesis.

"'My child,' suddenly exclaimed Madame, 'you are composing a parti-colored lily: I want a white one.'

"In fact, absorbed in thought and dreams of the future, I had arranged a lily of red, blue and white leaves; I smiled at the odd effect and began another.

"'Monsieur Belmont informed me, the other day, that he intended taking you to Naples, to make your first appearance there at the Lan Carlo,' observed Madame, as she turned a page of the book she was reading.

"'Ah! indeed,' for this was unexpected news. 'I thought I was going to rejoin Inez and Blanche; I should like to be with them.'

"'I thought so too, but it seems not; neither are they with each other at present. Inez still performs at Berlin, where, it seems, she is a great favorite; and Blanche is at Munich; the journals speak of her as warbling like a nightingale. It scarcely seems four years since she left us; you were all dutiful, obedient pupils, and have done honor to the school by your great musical talents.'

"Madame closed her book, and left the room; I laid the bouquet of wax flowers which I had just completed, upon a table, and rose to go also; as I did so, my eyes unconsciously rested upon the enormous mirror, in which eight years ago, I had seen my tiny person reflected, the first day I came to school. I again saw myself reflected on its smooth surface; instead of a small, delicate child, I beheld a well developed girl, whose long hair fell in ringlets to her waist; the expression of her features was thoughtful, almost sad. While gazing upon this inanimate image of myself, I fell into a reverie; every little incident that had ever happened, during my long residence at the house,

seemed to be vividly revived by memory. I looked around upon the parlor and its furniture; I wished to impress the appearance of that room upon my mind, that I might be able to recall it, perhaps for my amusement, at some future day. I was going into the world, to enter into a new sphere of life, among new faces, and new scenes. Inez and Blanche had before this been initiated into its mysteries; perhaps too, they had changed and become women of the world, but I trusted not.

"The loud ringing of the bell, which was always rung at twilight, to assemble the pupils for study, aroused me, and I joined my companions.

CHAPTER V.

"The following day I departed, Madame Deville kissed me several times, and warmly embraced me. She seemed to feel more regret at parting from me, than I had seen her manifest upon the similar occasions of bidding adieu to Inez and Blanche; for myself, I felt sorry to leave, and yet glad to go. To spend one's existence in an automaton-like performance of fixed rules, laid down for us by others, is surely not a life of action; and action is the object and purpose of our being, that each should bear his share of the joys, cares, and responsibilities of existence, is evidently the intent of our being sent upon earth.

"Monsieur Belmont placed me in the hackney coach, which was to take us to the post-house, whence we took the diligence, to one of the principal towns on the road to Naples; my luggage was strapped on behind; my teacher placed himself by my side and closed the carriage door; the driver cracked his whip and we started. As I heard the rumbling of the coach wheels on the rough stones of the pavement, a feeling of loveliness, of isolation, stole over me. I, a simple school girl, had left the abode of years, and was about to be cast forth upon that great chaos, the world; still I hoped that the invisible hand of some angel-guardian, would guide me safely through the dark clouds of obscurity, even unto the bright sun of the most perfect day. Since that day I have travelled over half the inhabited world, but I never experienced a sadder feeling, than on the day I bade farewell to the boarding-school at Vienna.

"It was a sweet morning in the month of May. Inez had left us in the summer time, Blanche, when autumn's yellow leaf strewed the ground; but a fresh spring day heralded my departure. The brisk trot at which we travelled soon carried us beyond the suburbs of the city, and the magnificent metropolis of the Austrian empire, its monuments, splendid churches, beautiful gardens, and glorious works of art, were left behind. My eyes dwelt upon them admiringly, as they gradually receded from my view; I was proud of the country, and place of my nativity; and in that great city I had lived for so many years, and yet was as ignorant of its gayeties, its vices and its crimes, as any poor countryman from the neighboring mountains.

"Our road lay along a fertile plain, bordered on the right by a lofty chain of mountains, on the left a small stream ran gurgling by; the gentle murmur of its waters sounded like the regular sonorous breathing of a sleeping child. Monsieur pulled out of his pocket a newspaper, and went to reading politics. It was evident that beautiful scenery had no charms for him. He left me undisturbed to my meditations, and I followed them; I looked down on the long green grass at my feet, interspersed with wild flowers, and I looked up at the blue heavens above my head, traversed here and there by fleecy white clouds, and I felt thankful to the beneficent Creator of all things, that he had placed me in so beautiful a world. I glanced across the plain at the lofty dark blue mountains, and then turned to the opposite side, where groves of tall poplars and graceful lindens waved their dark green foliage in the sunshine.

"Gradually, as we journeyed on, the scene changed; the plain was distanced, and we ascended a hill and rode through a thick forest. I listened to the mournful cooing of the doves, the chirping of the birds, and the hollow sound of the breeze, as it whistled through the trees; the snake glided through the brushwood and vanished at our approach, and the deer ran startled away, little partridges ran about on the ground, calling each other in the unintelligible language of the brute creation. I enjoyed everything I saw with that untarnished freshness of feeling, the attribute of early youth. Man becomes accustomed to anything, and everything, and a continued repetition of the same thing, even if it be beautiful, becomes tiresome. To love or appreciate a person or thing long, we must throw around it, or them, an air of mystery, of reserve, for undisputed possession sooner or later brings satiety. Poor frail human nature! why is it, destined child of dust, that thou canst only love ardently while the object of thy passion is unattained? A lover will run all risks, do anything to obtain his mistress; yet when

once his own, grow weary of her in a month; the fervor of his passion will cool down to positive indifference, sometimes degenerate into neglect or personal abuse.

"Monsieur still sat coning over the news; he had journeyed that road a hundred times before, and consequently did not care for trees, nor flowers, nor green grass. Towards evening the driver drew up before the door of a small, dirty-looking post-house, situated in a deep ravine, surrounded by steep precipices; a waterfall ran bounding down the rocks, with a wild, musical sound. The situation was picturesque and grand; two women, upon their knees, on the edge of the stream, washing their clothes, chatted to each other, and their faces wore the expression of smiling content. Upon the steps of the house sat a beautiful girl, sewing some ribbonds together; on which she was placing glass beads of different colors. She smiled to herself as she did so, probably anticipating the effect this piece of rustic finery would have upon the heart of some village lover. A princess, while contemplating a tiera of diamonds, could not have felt happier than did this cottage girl with her head-dress of ribonds. There is something charming in nature, and in rural life; it is so natural, so pure, so unalloyed by the manœuvering, the hypocrisy, the turmoil of social existence; it is the primitive state of being our first parents led, and to its peaceful shades has many a hackneyed man and woman of the world returned, as a tired child to its mother's arms, to seek for peace and repose.

"After waiting sometime the diligence made its appearance; we got into it, ourselves the only passengers, and the carriage returned from whence it came; the postillion winded his horn as we flew rapidly away. We followed the course of the Danube; it was a dark night, the sky only illumined by the stars; I could not obtain a distinct view of this majestic river, still as we rolled along upon its beautiful banks, I thought of the lessons I had so often repeated about the invasion of the Goths and Vandals, and how they had crossed the great river on their way to Rome.

"Our journey occupied the space of four days; we travelled without stopping, and long before we reached Naples, my strength was nearly exhausted from fatigue. When the boundaries of Italy were passed, and we had entered upon the fertile plains of Tuscany, my eyes dwelt delighted on all they saw. The peasantry in their fanciful costume, the blooming vineyards, and pretty cottages, all, by turns, enraptured me. Monsieur Belmont sometimes talked to me about Naples and my future career; sometimes read the everlasting newspapers, in which he

seemed to take so lively an interest, and sometimes dozed away the time.

"We passed several beautiful villas, and fine plantations; in the latter, numerous male and female peasants were at work in the fields. Their care-worn faces, begrimed with sweat and dirt, bearing testimony to the labor they performed; from my heart I most sincerely pitied them. To stand for hours under the burning heat of the sun digging, ploughing, and gathering the grape when harvest-time arrived, could be no enviable task; the women were frightful, the sun had turned their naturally dark skins to a copper hue; their short petticoats exposed their sinewy legs and bare feet, large and ugly, from never having been compressed in shoes. They scarcely looked like human beings, and my gaze wandered quickly away in search of more romantic objects to dwell upon.

"We stopped an hour at Pisa to dine; and as everything is hurry and confusion at an Italian Inn, upon the advent of a stranger, Monsieur, learning that our dinner would not be ready for a quarter of an hour, took me down the street to look at the celebrated Leaning Tower of Pisa. We paused before its graceful front, and I looked up at the eight tiers of white marble arches, each different from the other in architecture, and each beautiful. We ascended to its summit by a circular stairway, which wound round and round within the building, till my head became confused; from the top I obtained a fine view of this ancient, and once powerful city. I looked down upon its broad, well-paved, but almost deserted streets, and recalled the warlike days of the republic. The tranquil Arno still ran swiftly past, as it did then; the plain on which the town stands was just as smiling and lovely, as in the days of yore, but the spirit of enterprise and commerce, which had once animated and enriched this classic town, had forever passed away.

"Dinner was ready when we returned. The excitement of the journey, and visit to the Leaning Tower, had almost deprived me of appetite, but my teacher made amends for my bad taste, by eating with the greatest voracity; he seemed to wonder at my indifference to the viands set before us.

"'Why don't you eat, child,' he suddenly demanded, while masticating some oranges, 'are you not hungry? I should think you would be after such a long ride; you had better eat something, for you will need nourishment before we stop again.'

"'I don't want anything to eat at present, sir,' I answered, 'and I have some biscuits in my pocket; if I feel hungry, I can eat them.

"Once more we were off; we now had company, in the shape of two Italians, young students from one of the universities of Pisa, returning home to Naples; they were handsome, talkative young men. The usual civilities having been mutually exchanged, Monsieur and they soon became involved in a long political discussion, interesting, I have no doubt, to them, but tiresome enough to me, since we take but little interest in that which we do not understand. Their conversation was sustained, apparently with much animation on both sides, for some hours. Monsieur Belmont talked well, he had seen a great deal of society, in all its different phases, and was a perfect man of the world; he did not look upon it with the same feeling of satiety, with which a *roué* views this fair earth; he had not the refinement, the elegance of mind necessary to form that character; his was merely the worldliness of a business-like mind. The young men with whom he conversed, were evidently inexperienced and unsophisticated; their views of life, and society in general, were certainly more theoretical than practical.

"It was the fourth day of our journey, we were rapidly approaching the enchanting Parthenope, the far-famed Eldorado of Italy. Already I could see the distant summit of Vesuvius, vomiting forth clouds of smoke. The majestic castle of Lan Elmo, upon the hill, and that of Castle Naovo, by the harbor, looked like two faithful sentinels, watching over their beloved city. Innumerable vessels, from all quarters of the globe, and of all sizes and shapes, rode quietly upon the azure bosom of the beautiful harbor. The domes and spires of its gothic churches rose high in air, glittering in the sunshine. The character of the scenery had changed as we neared the town; the dense, gloomy forests of Austria, and the wild mountainous scenery of northern Italy, had given place to the rocky, volcanic soil, and level plains of the environs of Naples, adorned with grapevines and fruit trees, while far away in the distance I saw the dark-blue tops of the Appenines. Well may the Neapolitan exclaim, with patriotic ardor, 'See Naples and die;' he thinks it a piece of heaven fallen upon earth, the garden spot of the world, and, with justice, may he cherish this opinion.

"The coach horses dashed down the hill leading into the city, as if the prince of darkness was at their heels, dragging the diligence after them at furious speed. Our travelling companions left us as we entered the gates; and after dashing through the fashionable thoroughfare, the street called Toledo, the postillion drove in various directions, up one street, and down another; now through broad, handsome streets, now through dirty crooked lanes, until at length, he stopped

before the door of a cottage, built in gothic style, of gray stone; it faced upon a quiet, pretty piazza, adorned with trees and flowers. Honeysuckle, myrtle and cypress vine, hung gracefully around the latticed windows of this sylvan abode. I wondered where my guardian was taking me to.

"At the noise of the coach wheels, the street door opened, and a woman who had once been handsome, but whose interesting countenance now bore the traces of age, attired in gray silk, stood upon the threshold. She bowed and smiled to Monsieur as the diligence drew up; he undid the coach door, jumped out, assisted me to do the same, and then presented her to me as Madame Bonni.

"'This is my little protegee, Madame, whom I wrote you I should bring on to Naples this year to make her debut; we have had a long, and dusty travel from Vienna.'

"'I am delighted to see you, my friend, and you also, my child; but pray enter my parlor, and I will order refreshments for you; you must feel very much fatigued after so long a journey.'

"The good lady took my hand and led me into her parlor. Monsieur, after giving some directions to the servants about the luggage, followed also. It was really a fairy little room, hung with fine paintings on the walls, damask curtains at the windows, several marble statues placed on pedestals, while a melodious musical box, and a beautiful canary bird in a cage, seemed to vie with each other in harmony. I took a seat near a window, the lady sat opposite me, and Monsieur threw himself on a sofa, and complained of the hot weather and trouble of travelling.

"'So this is the young lady who sings so splendidly; but I understood that you had three protegees to bring out: where are the other two?' inquired the lady, after having attentively surveyed me for a moment.

"'This one is the youngest of the three; they were all educated at the same school together—Madame Deville's, at Vienna—but Inez and Blanche completed their education first, being the oldest, and have been performing four or five years. Inez is making a fortune for herself at Berlin, and Blanche I left at Munich.'

"'I should like to hear the young lady sing, if she will oblige me with a song; I have a fine piano here.' She crossed the room, uncovered an enormous German instrument, and ran her fingers over the keys.

"'Certainly my pupil will be happy to do so,' said my teacher, answering for me. 'She has no need to be afraid of singing: her voice

is magnificent; she will make the greatest singer of the day. Come, Genevra, sing something from Norma for my friend.'

"I placed myself at the piano; I was confident of my own abilities, and therefore felt no hesitancy in complying with the request. I chose an air from Norma, and sang it. I recollected many years before how astonished I had been at the power and compass of Blanche's voice, but now my own tones far excelled hers. I was almost surprised at myself, as I rose from the piano.

"'Magnificent!' cried the lady, 'I never heard such a voice, not even among our best songstresses; so much sweetness and power combined; she will make a great sensation in our city, when she makes her appearance.'

"Monsieur smiled; he looked pleased, but said nothing; I presume he was afraid of spoiling me by too much praise. At this moment, a domestic entered, bearing a tray of refreshments, and conversation for the moment was postponed.

"Madame took me into her pretty garden, and showed me her birds and flowers. She gathered me a bouquet of choice flowers, which I afterwards placed in water. When I went to my room at night, she told me she was the widow of an Italian army officer, and now lived upon an annuity paid her by government; she never had any children, and felicitated herself upon my visit, as that of a companion and friend. She was not intellectual, nor pretty now, but kind-hearted and sincere, and sincerity and goodness are certainly attractive. I did not in return confide to her the details of my childhood, for I could not have done so without humbling myself in my own, and in her esteem, and my pride would not allow me to do that, but I spoke on general subjects; of the city, its beautiful scenery, and splendid buildings, and of the beauty of the peasantry I had seen as I journeyed toward it. On these subjects the enthusiastic Italian was at home, for the Neapolitans are desperately enamoured of their own lovely land. We passed an hour in pleasant conversation, then returned to the parlor, where tea was served; my teacher favored us with a song; he sang magnificently; and I also sang a duet with him, which elicited Madame's raptures. At ten o'clock, we retired to rest, I felt almost worn out with fatigue; the lady conducted me up stairs, to a neat little chamber opposite her own.

"'I hope this room will suit you,' said the kind-hearted woman, as she followed me into it; 'if you want anything, pray ring the bell and my servant will attend you; I know you must long to go to rest, after so long a journey, so I will not tire you by conversation. Good night, my child.'

"'Good night,' I replied. The door closed, and I was left alone; I set my little lamp in the fire-place, and after I had undressed and repeated the rosary, I stepped into the pretty bed, draperied with white, and drew its curtains close around me. I could scarcely realize that I was not in Madame Schiller's dormitory; and, at dawn, I started sud- from my slumber, imagining I heard her voice calling the girls to rise. Finding myself wide awake, I thought I would get up, and did so; all was quiet in the house, no one stirring; faint hues of morning sun were rising slowly in the East. I heard the sound of deep, sonorous breathing, as I passed a door at the head of the stairs, which I justly concluded were the nocturnal tones of my guardian. I went into the parlor, and finding on a table an interesting novel, took it in my hand, and sought the garden; under a wide-spreading Acacia tree, I sat down upon a rustic bench; I saw an old female domestic making a fire in the kitchen, and beginning to prepare breakfast; I looked at her as she moved about, and wondered if I should ever live to become as old and ugly as she; if my cheeks, now so round and firm, should become shriveled and hanging like pieces of dried skin; my form, attenuated and hideous; my hair turn gray and fall out, and my eyes watery and blinking, like those of a sick lap-dog; yet it was natural to suppose, that in the course of nature all those things would come to pass. We see those who have once been handsome and intellectual, grow ugly, old, and stupid; their beauty fades away like a fleeting dream; their intellect declines with the vigor of body which supported it. If mind is soul, and if the soul is immortal, should we not reasonably suppose, that this etherial principal would preserve itself bright and untarnished from the gathering gloom of years; that time, instead of dimming, would only add new glories to its spiritual splendor; but these thoughts were then too metaphysical for my youthful comprehension.

"While thus I mused, the sun had risen high, and his bright rays fell across the gravel walk where I sat; I heard footsteps in the vestibule, and looking up, saw Madame Bonni attired in a white muslin wrapper; she perceived me, and came into the garden.

"'Why, my child, you are indeed an early riser,' was her morning salutation; 'I expected you would sleep late after your journey; but you look refreshed, and I am happy to see it.'

"'At school, we always rose at dawn of day; from habit, I awake early, and prefer spending the sweet morning hours in reading, rather than waste them in slumber.'

"'You are right in doing so; when I was young I was fond of

reading too, but since I have advanced in life, its busy cares have banished literature and romance from my mind.'

"The old woman whom I had observed, now came to her mistress, and announced that breakfast was ready; I followed Madame to the dining-room; we sat down to a comfortable breakfast, served with exquisite neatness. Monsieur joined us in a few minutes: he was yawning, and expressed himself as feeling very dull; and, in fact, his appearance fully corroborated the assertion.

"After breakfast, I accompanied him to the San Carlo Opera house, where he took me, he said, that I might see the actors rehearse, and observe stage trick and manner. Since then I have seen tricks enough played off upon the stage of life, independent of the drama. We need not go to the theatre to see actors and actresses. We ascended through the basement story, the passage obstructed by old rubbish, stage furniture, to the green-room—a miserable looking apartment, draperied with green baize; several actors and actresses stood in groups, conversing, in their ordinary dress; I looked out behind the scenes; I saw on all sides the rough boards of the theatre, and the large open spaces through which the actors went upon the stage, and the scenes were shifted backward and forward; everything looked unfinished and bare, it looked like the skeleton frame of a house, and in no way realized my romantic visions of a theatre. Several of the actors held Opera books in their hands, which they appeared to be studying; Monsieur went around the room, bowing, and shaking hands with all, receiving, and paying compliments in return.

"'Ah, my dear fellow,' exclaimed a tall, dark-complexioned man, seizing him by the arm, 'when did you arrive? Glad to see you among us again. I did not expect to see you for a year to come; thought you intended going to Paris to perform. I was at Munich a few weeks ago, where I heard of the brilliant success of a protegee of yours, a Mademoiselle Blanche Ricorsi; I went several nights to see her play: a beautiful girl, she sings divinely.'

"'And here is another pupil of mine,' said Monsieur, drawing me toward him, 'whom I intend shall astonish the fashionable world of Naples.'

"'Ah, Mademoiselle, charmed to see you; hope you will do credit to so distinguished a preceptor; you must sing something for me this morning; I should like to hear your style of voice; we are now going in to rehearsal. Come, ladies and gentlemen, are you ready? Allow me to escort you, Mademoiselle.'

"With French politeness and volubility, he offered me his arm; at

that time, unacquainted with the ways and usages of society, I felt momentarily surprised; but mechanically I accepted it, and the others following behind, we stepped out upon the stage; it was an enormous platform, and I felt, and looked, almost like a little child, as I walked across its smooth boards. I wondered how I should feel when I should be the most conspicuous object on that floor, when I should see before me those successive walls of human faces, so terrifying to a novice,—the eyes of all bent upon me.

"The actors walked toward the front of the stage; part of the orchestra was in the musicians' box, and accompanied their voices with instrumental music; they were rehearsing for Norma; some of the voices were sweet and thrilling, others grated harshly on my ear. The woman who was to perform the part of Norma, was neither young nor pretty: she did not look the beautiful stately priestess. The man who was cast for the character of Polelio, was as ugly a person as one need wish to see. I stood leaning against one of the side scenes and listened to them as they ran through the Opera. When ended, the French manager requested me to sing a song, which he chose. I felt somewhat diffident at exhibiting my voice before so many strangers. I wished to refuse, but a look from Monsieur Belmont, which spoke a command, changed my purpose, and I complied. I began almost falteringly at first, but gathering courage as I went on, I forgot those who were listening to me, and became absorbed in the sentiment of the song. I think I can say without egotism, that I sang well; when I had ceased the manager approached with a surprised air:

"'Good heavens! Mademoiselle, you are a perfect nightingale, your high notes are exquisite; I shall be proud to constitute you prima donna of my troupe, when you are ready to appear; you must have applied yourself with unceasing assiduity to have formed your voice.'

"'I have been learning for six or eight years past, under the tuition of Monsieur Belmont.'

"'Your execution has indeed astonished me, in one so young; and I was equally amazed when I heard Blanche, another pupil of my friend's, sing at Munich.'

"'How is Blanche now? is she well? is she happy?'

"'You know her, then?'

"'Oh yes, we were educated at the same school.'

"'I cannot answer you in regard to her happiness; but she looks beautiful, and sings like a bird.'

"'Did you ever see my other friend, who was also a pupil of Monsieur's, Inez Fontana?'

"'A year ago, I saw her at Dresden; she left the following day to fulfil an engagement at Berlin; she is a charming woman, handsome, dark; has a deep, sweet, sonorous voice, but not the power or execution of yourself or Blanche. There was a rumor afloat in town of her being about to marry and leave the stage; it may be only report, however; I cannot vouch for its truth.'

"'It would seem very strange to me, to see my old school mate married.'

"'Why, is it not natural to suppose, that a handsome young woman, with a good reputation, should marry, and make some worthy man happy?'

"'It is natural that women in private life should do so, but actresses seldom do.'

"'But when they have the opportunity, should they not embrace it?'

"I was about to reply, when my teacher, having finished his confabulations with his acquaintances, approached me.

"'Well, my friend,' cried he, 'what do you think of my little pupil, I see you have been conversing with her?'

"'I am afraid Mademoiselle would think I flattered her, if I spoke my real sentiments,' answered the gallant Frenchman, with his hand upon his heart.

"Monsieur laughed; for compliments seemed to him, as they always seemed to me, mere nonsense; things which are said without being felt, and therefore valueless. The actors had now all left the stage; after inviting his old friend to call upon him, Monsieur and myself returned home.

"I pass over the space of four months, during which time, I was occupied in learning the part of Norma; my preceptor gave me lessons every day in acting, in a large unoccupied room, Madame Bonni appropriated to my use for that purpose; determined to succeed, I studied with ardor and assiduity, until at length, I perfected myself in my part, to his and my own complete satisfaction.

"It was the night of my appearance: large placards announcing that fact, with my name printed upon them in immense capitals, had been posted in front of the theatre for several days previous; Monsieur said they anticipated a crowded house. I had been in a state of feverish excitement all day, which increased rather than diminished as evening drew near; the costume of Norma I had prepared sometime before, and sent it to my dressing-room at the theatre to await my coming. Madame Bonni, desirous of hearing me sing, had engaged seats in one of the stage boxes for herself and a gentleman friend.

"'You do not feel apprehensive of a failure, do you, Genevra?' asked my teacher, as he, Madame, and myself, sat conversing together in the parlor, in the afternoon.

"'Not in the least, sir; I feel perfectly confident of success.'

"'I am glad to hear you say so; I hope you will make a sensation; if you feel self-possessed, you will act so, and consequently succeed. I expect Blanche here in a few weeks to fulfil an engagement, and then you can sing together.'

"'Is Blanche coming to Naples? how glad I shall be to see her again, and Inez, does she never come here to play?"

"'Inez has often sang here since she left your school; you know it is six years ago; but she generally prefers playing, alternately at Dresden or Berlin, where she is extremely popular.'

"'Is it true, what the manager told me, that she thought of marrying, and leaving the stage?'

"'I am not conversant with any of her matrimonial plans; you can ask Blanche when she arrives; I presume they are each other's confidants.'

"Monsieur resumed his conversation with Madame about old times, and I went to my favorite seat in the garden, to while away the time till six o'clock. The air was soft and balmy; the delightful sea breeze, which blows off the coast every morning and evening, was now refreshing the air; under that clear, tropical sky, everything looks beautiful; the flowers seem to be of brighter hue; the turf more verdant; the people happier, than under those cold northern climes, where the bleak winters, and cloudy skies, seem to chill and contract men's souls. The kind-hearted Neapolitan lives only in the present; he enjoys the pleasures of to-day without thinking of the future; he is willing to share what little he has, with any fellow creature less plentifully endowed than himself; and is it not better to live and feel thus, than to spend one's lifetime in amassing treasures, which, when we die, we are obliged to leave for others to enjoy; since nothing is truer than that, man brings nothing into the world with him, neither can he carry anything away. Death is a market place where all men meet; the king, noble, and peasant, are all equal, when they meet in the bosom of mother earth. As I soliloquized, twilight gathered upon the face of things animate and inanimate; it is charming to watch the shades of evening gray descend upon a land like that; to see the mellow hues of dusk come slowly on, and the bright sun disappear, till finally they fade away into indefinite night. I should have liked to have staid and watched the sky, but Monsieur called me; it was time to go, he said; in fact, I had actually forgotten all about my theatrical engagement.

"I went to my room and put on my bonnet and shawl, we got into a hack and drove off; Madame would not come for an hour, as the curtain did not rise till half-past seven.

"Entering, as I had done before, through the basement, my teacher went to the green-room, where many of the actors were already assembled, and I to my dressing-room, passing on the way numerous princes, grand dukes, and nobles; who, like too many of their titled brethren, could boast no other wealth than the insignia of their order. They all stared at me as I hurried past them; curious, I suppose, to observe the new singer.

"I quickly arrayed myself in the long white robes, and mysterious girdle of the priestess; scarcely had I completed my toilet, when there came a knock at the door: I opened it, and saw the manager.

"'Are you ready, Mademoiselle? It is time to go on; you know the part perfectly, do you not?' he continued, as we approached the side scene, where I was to enter.

"'Perfectly, Monsieur. Entertain no apprehensions on my account.'

"The gentleman smiled, bowed, released my arm, and I entered alone. I saw an immense crowd of human faces and forms before me; the house presented a brilliant array of fashion and beauty; the light of the chandeliers was dazzling; far from feeling intimidated, I felt perfectly at home. I had been fearful lest I should forget my notes, but they remained firmly impressed on my mind; a tumult of applause shook the house as I came forward to the foot-lights; when it had subsided I began to sing, almost forgetful that there was any audience there, and thinking only of my part. I acted naturally, and, therefore, pleasingly—for nature is ever pleasing. At the conclusion of the first act, a round of applause again greeted me; and when I went behind the scenes, Monsieur and the manager warmly congratulated me on my self-possession, in the song Dele Conte, a duet between Norma and Adelgisa; I was encored, and sang it twice; my cheeks were flushed like crimson, and I felt elated at my manifest triumph. At the conclusion of the Opera, a shower of bouquets and wreaths were thrown at my feet; one splendid wreath of exotic flowers, which struck my hand as it fell on the floor, was thrown from one of the stage boxes; happening to uplift my eyes, as I was singing the last song of the Opera, my gaze met that of a magnificent looking man, who stood quietly contemplating me. There was something in the magnetic attraction of those large languid black eyes, which sent a new thrill of life, a feeling I had never experienced, rushing through my veins; what could that inexplicable sensation mean? it was probably that man who had thrown

the wreath at my feet. One of the actors gallantly picked it up, and placed it upon my head. Once more I heard myself applauded; delightful sound of approval, and the curtain fell.

"I felt exhausted from my violent exertion of voice, and sat down in the green-room, while the manager fanned me, and the other actors complimented me. Monsieur Belmont seemed well pleased with me and himself, and was in his best humor.

"'You have made a decided hit, Mademoiselle,' said my faithless husband of the play; 'although you are not yet perfect in stage trick and manner, yet you have done wonders for the first time.'

"'I am obliged to you for the compliment, Monsieur,' I replied.

"One of the servants of the theatre came into the room, bearing an armful of bouquets (the beautiful wreath still remained upon my head). When deposited in my lap, the jewels amid the flowers sparkled in the lamp light. 'What do you intend doing with all these flowers, petite enfant?' asked my guardian.

"'Oh, I shall carry them home to Madame Bonni, as trophies of my triumph: are they not beautiful, Monsieur?'

"'Yes, very beautiful; some of those jewels among them I should think were valuable; but it is time to depart. Let the servant carry your flowers to the carriage.'

"The manager politely attended me to the door of the carriage, and placed me in it.

"Madame Bonni had reached home before us, and we passed an hour in discussing the events of the night. Good little woman! the world still seemed fresh and new to her, although she had long since passed the zenith of life. Even so trivial a thing as a visit to a theatre could afford her pleasure. Happy are those, I say, who can be pleased by trifles. What is our whole existence but a composition of trifles?

"I went to bed, but not to sleep for many hours. When I entered my room, and stopped before the mirror, the diamonds among the flowers of my wreath glistened like stars. I took it from my head, and after removing the jewels, and a beautiful ring hanging to it, I placed it in water with my bouquets. Sleep seemed to fly my eyelids. However, for long after I had gone to bed, the plaudits of the audience, and the languid eyes of the gentleman in the stage box, seemed alternately to ring in my ears, or swim before my eyes. At last, the angel Sleep kindly weighed down my eyelids with her rosy fingers, and I forgot the opera, the gentleman, and the bouquets.

CHAPTER VI.

"I awoke in the morning, persuaded that it was all a fairy dream, when, glancing at my toilet table, I was convinced of the reality of my adventure, by seeing the flowers still lying where I had left them. I examined the jewels, and found them as radiant by daylight as they had been the night before, wondering at this unknown and munificent gift. I laid them carefully away in my dressing-case, and descended to the breakfast table, where I found my guardian and Madame Bonni busily engaged in discussing the merits of my performance; both were praising me—she with a woman's impulse and enthusiasm, Monsieur in a man's quiet, reasoning way.

"'How do you feel after last night's effort?' inquired the gentleman.

"'Very well, sir, but rather fatigued,' I answered.

—"'How sweet you looked in the last act, my dear; those white lace robes were so becoming to you; and when the flowers were thrown on the stage, and the actor placed that superb wreath upon your head, I thought the effect exquisite,' observed Madame, with feminine admiration of dress.

"'I am glad you were pleased with me.'

"'You sing again to-night, do you not, in the same opera?'

"'Yes, for five nights in Norma.'

"'I should like to see the morning journals, to know what they say of you

"'So should I,' said Monsieur,' as he rose from the table; 'and as it is unnecessary for you to attend rehearsal this morning, I will go out and look in the newspapers, to see what is said about you, and when I return, bring them to you.'

"He departed, and I spent the morning in practising some of my songs. At noon he returned, and I had the satisfaction of reading a long panegyric on my personal appearance, manner, and singing. They called me the Austrian nightingale, a name which I was afterwards known by for many years. That night, I played again, to a house crowded to overflowing. The applause was as great as the evening previous, and flowers were again thrown me, but when, as on leaving the stage, I timidly glanced upward to the stage box, my eyes encountered, instead of the beautiful orbs which had enchanted

me the night before, an impertinent opera-glass directed at my face. I felt disappointed, I scarce knew why; for what reason had I to suppose that the same stranger should not be there again?

"A month after my first appearance, I received an invitation, through Monsieur Belmont, to sing at the private soiree of a lady of rank, the Countess Bramonti; and although the idea of being merely a singer for the entertainment of others, was not gratifying to my sensitive pride, still, to oblige my kind benefactor, who had been to me a perfect saviour, I consented to go. I had suddenly become the rage of Naples. 'I awoke one morning,' as a great poet has since said, 'and found myself famous;' numerous gentlemen had called on me, attracted, I suppose, by rumors of my youth, my isolated position, and my good looks, for I can say without vanity that, at sixteen, I possessed personal attractions. I only repeat what others said, and one cannot remain long ignorant of that which is universally known: we seldom appreciate the value of beauty, and the great influence it exercises upon the minds of men, until it is on the decline, and then we cling to and treasure its wrecks with jealous care.

I dressed myself for the party in a white satin robe, and placed an artificial wreath of silver oats in my hair. I had arranged it in smooth bandeau, the heat of the weather rendering ringlets uncomfortable. When attired, I glanced at myself in the mirror, and feeling satisfied with my appearance, was, consequently, in a good humor; for it is said, that, when pleased with one's self, one is always pleased with others.

"Seeking for my gloves on the toilet table, my eyes rested momentarily on the withered wreath, which I still preserved. The leaves hung lifeless; the bright hues of the flowers had faded. Alas! poor ephemeral flowers, is not your brief but beautiful existence a type of woman's life also? When young and lovely they are loved and cherished; led forth like queens to be admired and adored, every wish anticipated, every caprice gratified; but when Time's rude hand has robbed these charms of their pristine glory, lovers gradually disappear like twinkling stars at dawn of day, and woman is left alone in the evening of her days, to think and dream over the past.

"The Countess Bramonti resided in a noble mansion at the court end of the city. To the marble steps of this aristocratic abode our carriage whirled on the night of which I speak. The moon shone brightly; and as I stepped from it, I saw, by its light, long lines of carriages, extending from the house each way down the street. The liveried servants in the grand hall escorted me to the dressing room,

where I left my hood and shawl. Several beautiful women, some of them of the nobility of Naples, were dispersed about the apartment, conversing in subdued tones, and arranging their dress before the long mirrors. Monsieur came for me at the door, and, leaning on his arm, I entered the grand hall of reception. At the head of this magnificent room, upon an elevated dias, covered with crimson velvet, stood the Countess herself, a large, finely-formed woman, perhaps forty years of age, becomingly dressed in full, flowing robes of scarlet velvet, and ostrich plumes waved majestically in her dark, luxuriant hair. She received me with that urbanity and politeness which is ever the result of good breeding, and the attribute of an elegant mind.

"As I passed through the gay and apparently happy crowd of smiling, lovely faces, many turned to look after me; but I felt the attention my presence excited, was paid rather to my sudden notoriety as a cantatrice, than to myself. Actresses, however virtuous, proud and talented they may be, will always, from their false position, experience a feeling of humiliation when introduced in private circles of society. They see and feel how much more beautiful and attractive woman is when sheltered from the rude gaze of the world, illumining only one mansion with her beauty, and diffusing love and kindness only to her own family and friends. Such a life is evidently, both from her mental and physical formation, more suitable for her than the empty plaudits of a gaping mob, or that applause of the world which exilirates momentarily, and leaves an aching void when gone. But we are all mere creatures of circumstance, and the noblest souls are most frequently subjected to the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

"These thoughts glanced across my mind, as the gay waltzers whirled past me, and the fine band stationed in the gallery poured forth its bewitching strains of music. The Countess had descended from her position, and mingled in the crowd, attended by several gentlemen. As she swept past me, gracefully supporting the train of her dress upon her arm, a tall, handsome young man, of elegant bearing, who walked at her right hand, bent his expressive blue eyes upon me for an instant, and then appeared to inquire of her who I was. The lady had passed me, but she looked back over her shoulder, as if to ascertain of whom he spoke, and then whispered something in reply. He again turned, and looked at me, not impertinently, but observingly. Numerous persons now intervened between me and my lady hostess, and I lost sight of her and the gentleman. After several quadrilles and waltzes had been danced, the music paused for a

while, and the Countess resumed her seat upon the throne. My guardian told me she wished to hear me sing. I wondered how I should sing with no instrument to accompany me; but that difficulty was soon solved; he led me through the crowd, and ascended the dias, where I saw a grand piano, which had been provided for the occasion. Monsieur Belmont seated himself at it, and I stood by his side. We sang a duet from Lucia de Lamermoor. I could not help observing that, during the whole song, the eyes of the gentleman who had been previously observing me, and who still stood by the Countess, were fixed upon me steadfastly—his earnest gaze almost annoyed me. At its conclusion, the Countess, apparently at his request, presented him to me as Monsieur de Serval.

"'I have, then, the pleasure of seeing our new star in the world of song; this is to me an unexpected pleasure,' said the gentleman, as he inclined his graceful form toward me. I bowed, and my eyes fell before his; no reply was needed.

"'We have to-night a gay assemblage,' he continued, 'and yourself one of the fairest among us. During the last week, almost nothing has been talked of but your personal appearance and your exquisite voice; and I trust, Mademoiselle, you will confide in my sincerity, when I say that the reality has not disappointed my ideal expectations.'

"I felt that this was an extravagant compliment, yet it was so delicately, charmingly paid, I wished to accept it as truth. From early youth, I have ever observed physiognomy, wishing to draw conclusions from the countenance as to the mind, and now I attentively regarded Monsieur de Serval. He was tall and delicately formed; his complexion was fair, like my own; his eyes were large, deep blue in color, with an expression of pensive thoughtfulness in their silent depths. This air of pensiveness, almost melancholy, pervaded his whole appearance. When speaking, his face would suddenly be lit up with a smile; then this look of joyousness would as quickly die away; it was grave, severe, and gay; it wore all expressions, it seemed to me, all at once. He was evidently a singular man, different to any one I had yet seen in life; there was a nameless something about him different to any man in that brilliant assembly of rank and fashion; yet he was not by any means the handsomest man there. When in repose, all expression seemed to vanish from his face, to return as quickly when he spoke again. How many indescribable nothings go to form a perfect whole. During ten minutes' conversation on indifferent topics, I had made up my mind that Monsieur de Serval was a charming person.

"'I perceive the company are wending their way to the banquet hall, will you allow me to escort you?' said he, after a moment's pause.

"I assented, took his arm, and we joined the gay crowd which was pouring through the parted leaves of the folding doors, into the gallery; this gallery was elegantly adorned with statues and paintings; at the opposite end another folding door stood open, and we entered a superb hall. The choice and tastefully arranged supper, ornamented with flowers and festoons of gold and silver tinsel, together with the dazzling light of the chandeliers, the gay dresses and jewels of the guests, their sprightly tones of conversation, and merry laughter, all formed a bright and exhilirating scene.

"The Countess stood at the head of one of the long tables, chatting, laughing to her beaux, and displaying her white teeth; while the diamond necklace which adorned her neck, reflected a thousand prismatic rays. The undulating motion of waving plumes, rich head dresses, and beautiful necks and arms, alternately entranced my eager gaze.

"'The Countess is looking well to-night; she is considered a fine looking woman, do you not think so?' asked the gentleman, as he handed me a dish of ice cream.

"'Yes, she is a handsome lady.'

"'And no less benevolent and talented, than good looking.'

"'Of the two, I would prefer being talented and benevolent without beauty, to possessing beauty without them,' I observed, almost unconsciously.

"'Ah, indeed, that is singular; young girls generally value their personal attractions, far above the attributes of mind.'

"'I must be very different to other women, then.'

"'One need only look at your face, and hear you speak, to perceive that, Mademoiselle Genevra.'

"'Different in my oddity alone, I presume.'

"'No, not in your eccentricity, but in your superiority to any girl of your age I have ever seen; but of course you know this, and I am merely repeating a trite compliment, which you will not thank me for, as you must have heard it a hundred times before.'

"'Indeed, you mistake me, sir, the language of compliment is entirely new to me; and in fact, I am a perfect novice in the world's ways; this is my first appearance in the gay world, as my preceptor not long since removed me from the boarding-school, where I was educated, at Vienna.'

"'You say you are inexperienced in the world's ways; well, remain so if you can, young lady, for they are not a desirable acquisition.'

"A cloud seemed to gather over his face, as he said this; I was confirmed in my indefinite presentiment, that he was a singular man. We seemed to be conspicuous objects to the gay assembly, for the eyes of hundreds were directed at us; they were probably commenting and wondering, how the elegant man of fashion should be so pointedly attentive to an opera singer. I had learned a great deal within one week of active life; my fairy dreams were rapidly fading away; the world, I saw, was not what I had imagined it. I saw no where those benevolent hearts, and generous actions, which I had fondly dreamed of; and here, at this very ball, how many bitter envies, rivalries, and antipathies, were agitating the hearts of those very people, masked on the surface by smiles.

"'Who is that Monsieur de Serval is with?' I heard a voice, immediately behind me, inquire of another.

"'Ah, do you not know the new opera singer? the Countess invited her here to-night to sing; do you like her voice?'

"'Yes, well enough; but do you think her beautiful?'

"'No, I do not, but every one to their fancy; the men have been raving about her angelic looks for the last week.'

"I looked at Monsieur de Serval; a significant smile sat upon his firm and finely chiseled lips, and I saw by the expression of his features, that he had also heard this little by-play. The banquet hall gradually thinned of its occupants; the guests returned to the ball room; we also went thither. Shortly after my teacher came for me to depart.

"'Permit me to see your pupil to the carriage,' said Monsieur de Serval, still retaining my hand upon his arm.

"'I am extremely obliged for the civility, Monsieur,' answered my teacher. He led the way down the grand staircase, through the marble hall, into the street; it was late, past two o'clock; the moon had disappeared, and dark masses of heavy clouds overhung the deep blue vault of heaven. Our carriage was ordered, and while it was driving up to the pavement, Monsieur de Serval said to me in a low tone, my teacher being a little in advance.

"'I hope you will not deem me impertinent, Mademoiselle, if I ask permission to visit you at the house where you now stay with your preceptor.'

"'I should be happy to see you, Monsieur.'

"'Well then,' said he, as he handed me into the carriage, 'I will do myself the honor of calling to-morrow; good evening, Mademoiselle; good evening, Monsieur Belmont.'

"The musical tones of his voice rang in my ears, as the carriage drove away.

"'It was a splendid affair, was it not, my child? and the Countess is a fine noble lady?' said Monsieur, as we rattled over the stones.

"'I admire her much,' I replied.

"'I perceive you are becoming a star here, a perfect magnet of attraction; every one speaks of you in praise,' was the next observation of this worthy man, who was somewhat slow in making discoveries of any kind, unless some one else had previously enlightened him.

"I made no reply to what he said; for by a train of ideas in thinking of Monsieur de Serval, and what he had said to me, my thoughts reverted to Blanche, and I wondered, and wished for her arrival in Naples; it was a long time since I had seen her; she must have altered much; I wondered if she still loved, and thought of me. My teacher had not specified any particular day for her arrival, but merely said, he expected her in a few days, or weeks. I longed for the society of some gentle one of my own sex. I began to perceive the brilliance, but isolated loveliness of my position; cut off from all social intercourse with other women; an object of admiration in the eyes of men; of indifference, envy, or contempt to women; I, therefore, longed to see my school-girl friend. Inez's mind had never so well assimilated to my own; there was too much of earth about her; her feelings were too sensual, to suit my dreamy, abstract speculations of an ideal love. Visions, I then had, in those fresh young days of platonic sentiment, before my soul was rendered practical by earthly passion; still Inez had grown a fine, handsome woman; and, from what I had heard, notwithstanding the many temptations to which an actress is ever exposed, had sustained an unblemished reputation. How often have I seen individuals of both sexes, who possessed cultivated minds, personal attractions, and elegant manners; the world considered them irresistible; and I acknowledged, and appreciated their perfections, yet their fascinations never reached my heart. It is a sympathetic tone of mind which mutually attracts us; for does not every one think the object they love beautiful? 'Beauty is only in the gazer's eye;' and the vanity of human nature induces us to believe that the object of our preference must be charming.

"In the afternoon of the following day, as I sat alone in the parlor, Madame Bonni being employed in domestic affairs, and Monsieur gone out on theatrical business; Arla, a pretty female attendant of the house, ushered into the room Monsieur de Serval. I was sitting by the window, dressed in a sky blue tissue; my arms and neck bare.

When he entered, I was amusing myself by singing to the canary bird; and the winged warbler hopped about his gayly gilded prison, and almost looked amazed, probably imagining he heard a free brother of the forest. I scarcely heard the light step of the gentleman, and he had already taken a seat near me, ere I looked around. I had unconsciously fallen into a reverie, and I presume my face wore an expression of sadness, for the first observation he made in his sweet low voice, was,

"'Your face wears a sadder expression by daylight, Mademoiselle, than it did last night, at the brilliant ball.'

"'That is its natural expression, Monsieur; the other was a momentary exhiliration.'

"'Ah, it is strange that one so young should ever feel sad; sadness generally comes with experience and satiety.'

"'But it seems to me that there is such a thing as living years in advance of time, and so I feel sometimes; an indefinite presentiment of unhappiness seems sometimes to hang over me, and so I have felt this afternoon.'

"'You should struggle against such feelings; they only render one morbid to no purpose; they make us dissatisfied with the present, and skeptical of the future; it only requires a slight effort of the will to overcome these presentiments; if you indulge in them, Mademoiselle, they will wither your freshness of heart, and impart to your gentle face an expression of gloom.'

"A pause succeeded for a moment; Monsieur de Serval bit his lip, and looked down at the floor; he appeared to be absent in mind and thinking. I could not help admiring his elegant appearance, and classical face; he was the first handsome, accomplished man, I had ever seen, secluded for so many years within the walls of my school. The men I had seen there at the monthly exhibitions, were generally commonplace and unattractive, although many of them were of the nobility of Vienna. Elegance and grace are indeed rare attributes, and almost as rarely to be met with among the nobility, as among the commonalty.

"How fascinating is beauty, and the winning ways some persons possess; how frequently it conceals a depraved heart and bad disposition. Oh, had I known at that moment of time, what I now know, how many days of sorrowful unhappiness might I have been spared the misery of enduring; but youth is presumptuous, self-confident, and conceited. Knowledge of the heart is only acquired by experience, and that generally comes too late to be of use to one; but let me not anticipate: everything has its time.

"Glancing around the room, Monsieur de Serval observed the canary bird, who resting upon his perch, seemed to regard us attentively.

"'Is that little feathered songster yours, Mademoiselle?'

"'No, Monsieur, it is Madame Bonni's little favorite.'

"'Madame Bonni,' he repeated, abstractedly.

"'The lady to whom this house belongs, with whom my teacher and I board.'

"'Ah, yes, I think I recollect having seen her once; she is a pleasant woman, and companionable for you sometimes, I presume.'

"'Since my arrival she has been extremely kind and attentive.'

"'And how do you feel upon being thus suddenly brought forward, a bright star in the etherial world of song?'

"'The same as I did when a simple school girl; the change, although an agreeable variation to school monotony, has made but little alteration in me.'

"'You are too philosophical to allow anything to disturb your equanimity of mind, I suppose.'

"'I do not know that I am a philosopher; I think the elevated tone of mind, necessary to form such a character, is beyond my powers of thought; but I endeavor to take the world as I find it, and quietly glide through my lot in life.'

"'A wise conclusion, Mademoiselle; the very remark shows you possess a fine mind, and, if you follow your precepts, you will doubtless be as happy as any human being ever is,' he sighed, and a cloud seemed to gather over his face. It struck me that he possessed himself a considerable share of that morbidness of feeling, which he had a moment before criticised and reproved in me; he seemed melancholy; perhaps, I thought, he has been slighted in love; women invariably attribute any sadness of look or manner, to some affair of the heart. I have grown wiser since then, and now, with more truth and justice, trace back this depression and gloom to an abuse of the affections, and consequently satiety.

"An alabaster vase of rare exotic flowers, stood upon a small chinese table, by my side; mechanically I had plucked one of the beautiful camilla japonicas, and was twirling it between my thumb and fore finger; the large blue eyes of Monsieur de Serval seemed to be attentively contemplating this pretty vegetable beauty.

"'I wish I were that flower, Mademoiselle,' said he.

"'Why, Monsieur?' I asked, rather astonished by the abrupt remark.

"'That I might experience the delight of being played with by those fairy fingers.'

"'I know of no enchantment by which I can metamorphose you into a flower; but since I cannot turn witch, at least allow me to offer you the one which elicited your compliment.'

"Playfully, I handed him the japonica; he took it with a smile, and placed it in the button hole of the dark blue coat he wore.

"'I shall preserve this as a precious souvenir, Mademoiselle Genevra.'

"'A very trivial keepsake.'

"'Ah!' he replied, 'it is our recollection of the donor, not the absolute value of a gift, which endears it to our memory.'

"What a just remark: how often have I treasured valueless things with loving care, from gratitude and love to the one who had bestowed them. Shortly after, Monsieur de Serval took his leave. 'Adieu, Monsieur,' said I, as he was about leaving the room, 'a bientot.'

"'Those words, "a bientot," recall "la belle France," and old associations. Farewell, Mademoiselle.' His tall and graceful form disappeared from my view; unconsciously, I fell into a chair, and mused upon the singularity of my new acquaintance, and his many fascinations, when Madame Bonni joined me. She appeared surprised when I told her of the visit of Monsieur de Serval.

"'My dear child, he is a fascinating, attractive gentleman; but do you know his reputation?'

"'No, he is an utter stranger to me; I was introduced to him at the Countess' party. I know nothing of him.'

"Well, I must tell you, to warn you against these gay men of the world, who are in fact not unfrequently like birds of prey; he has for many years been considered a profligate man of fashion; he has run through with a large fortune of his own, and draws largely upon an aunt of his, for means to support his expensive way of living. He is said to have squandered his money in gambling; among women of improper character; in horse racing, and divers other fashionable vices. Knowing your virtuous character, I take the liberty of cautioning you, Mademoiselle. You will not be offended at me, I trust, for thus speaking?'

"'On the contrary, I feel grateful for your kind admonitions; but it seems strange to me that so interesting and graceful a gentleman can be so depraved.'

"'You may depend upon my veracity, I assure you; I know this to be a fact; he is a man of seductive manners, and has always had the reputation of being eminently successful among women; and I should

suppose from his gentle ways that he would be a favorite. I would not have mentioned this, but your beauty, your isolated position in life; having no protector but your innate sense of virtue, and Monsieur Belmont, who looks upon these things in a philosophical point of view, and would care little what you did; your great musical abilities, and the celebrity you are rapidly acquiring, all these conspire to render you a conspicuous object of pursuit to these gay men of fashion. Had I a daughter, as young, and as beautiful as yourself, I should wish that some matron, experienced in the world's ways, might advise her of the snares of life; and, since you have been here, I feel toward you almost the same affection a mother feels for a child; you possess the sentiments and character of a lady; you should have been born the daughter of some noble house, in which position you might have passed your life in luxurious elegance, without being subjected to this laborious and disagreeable profession.'

"I felt the truth of the good woman's remarks, and thought upon them long after she had left me; still I could not consent to believe *all* that she had said concerning Monsieur de Serval; perhaps he had been wild, most young men are, and he was yet under thirty, perhaps extravagant; but that he was a systematic, practised *roué*, I really could not think of believing. The expression of his features was so sweet, so sincere; his manner was so amiable; Madame might have been misinformed, or personal prejudice had blinded her. Thus ever do we cheat ourselves where our affections, or predilections are interested, we use every possible sophism to convince ourselves, that those whom we fancy, are everything our fond imaginations picture them as being; determinately closing our eyes and ears against facts which speak to the contrary.

"I had not been to church since my arrival in Naples, so entirely had my new profession engrossed my attention; my conscience almost reproached me for this neglect of what I had been taught to consider so important a duty. In Naples, I perceived that religion was regarded by the higher classes as a matter of custom and form; few, save among the humble peasantry, went to church from sincere faith, or love of prayer; the poor, humble worms of earth, believe with blind confidence, whatever their priests tell them; they are generally contented and happy, amid the humble pursuits, the lowly joys, of their restricted sphere in life; and sometimes, when contemplating these unsophisticated children of nature, I have wondered whether they are not after all, wiser than those great philosophers, who propel their minds into the regions of science, and yet ultimately discover that we can learn

nothing positive of that futurity, which no mortal has the ability to comprehend; no one can doubt but that they are happier, if not wiser than those learned skeptics, however humble the former, or great the latter may be; and surely that belief, be it Protestant or Catholic, which teaches us to bear patiently the misfortunes and ills of life; to confide and trust in that beneficent Spirit, the creator, from the beginning of time to eternity, of all things; that abstract and immaterial principle which we, without understanding, can only venerate and adore. Surely that wrapt devotion, that blind reliance, is better than skepticism, in which we have nothing to console us in regard to futurity, and yet are satisfied with our own conclusions.

"Pardon me, my kind friend, these many digressions and reflections; yet I cannot forbear making them, when I recall those old days.

"Madame Bonni had repeatedly invited me to attend mass with her: until now I had declined; but on the Sunday following the conclusion of my two weeks' engagement, which had ended with much eclat for me and profit to my teacher, I promised to go with her to early mass, at the French church of Sacre Cœur.

"We rose with the dawn, and together bent our steps to the house of prayer, which was situated perhaps half a mile from home. She attired in her usual dress of gray silk, wearing a mantilla, thrown over her head, without a bonnet. I in spotless white, a scarf of blue crape around my shoulders, and a white chip pamela bonnet, then in vogue. Even at that early hour, the streets were alive with pedestrians, summoned by the bells to their devotions. Splendid equipages and humble calesso's jostled each other as they rattled along. Ladies, attended by their footmen, carrying their prayer books, passed the poor sempstress; the lady's maid; the Neapolitan peasant, with her madonna-like coiffure, and classic face; the pretty attendants of shops, hurrying to their devotions before they began the business of the day; the gay, happy-looking peasant beaux, dressed in their holiday clothes, sauntered along; and, in contrast to them, the dignified, grave Italian noble, glided past with quick and quiet pace.

"The enormous leaves of the bronze-gilt doors of the church were opened wide, and a crowd of devotees were entering the edifice, as we also went in. We walked up the great middle aisle, where, kneeling upon its polished marble surface, were numerous worshippers, devoutly telling their beads, and murmuring their prayers in whispered tones. Madame Bonni walked to the foot of the sanctuary, and kneeling before it, repeated her rosary. The bright sunlight began to cast a thousand different rays through the stained glass of the gothic

windows.. Leaning against one of the corinthian pillars of the centre aisle, I looked around; all was still as the chamber of death; the sun had not yet fully illumined the beautiful church; the distant corners, and niches, wherein statues were placed, remained in dim twilight; even the sanctuary would not have been clearly distinguishable, had it not been lighted by an alabaster lamp, suspended over the altar. The priests had not yet made their appearance, nor had the choir began to sing.

"Near me, inlaid upon the wall, was an oblong marble tablet; and engraved upon it, I read the epitaph of one of the deceased cardinals of the church. I do not know why, but the sight of that tablet, the associations of time and place, the early hour of day, the solitude and silence of the church, brought home more vidvidly to my mind than I had ever felt before—the thought of death. I had seen grave stones and epitaphs a hundred times before, but had always glanced at them carelessly, without fully realizing that they were actually the abodes of the dead; of beings who, when living, had been animated with the same hopes, fears, and passions as myself; but who now slumbered on unheeded and unheeding. Yet why should we mourn for the dead, even for those we most love and cherish? to die in this life, is only to begin a new existence in some other state of being; and since we cannot penetrate beyond that dark abyss, the boundary of life, we must look forward with hope, and confidently trust in our Creator.

"I had stood facing the sanctuary, and absently gazing upon it, when the door of the vestry opened, and the train of priests and boys entered; at the same moment the music began. In looking at the splendid robes which the priest wore, as the representative of Christ, I could not help recalling to mind the manner of *His* life, who, when he was upon earth, had not where to lay his head. His holiness, his self-denial, his purely spiritual life, so poorly exemplified by the modern Italian priesthood; the most miserable among whom fares sumptuously every day, compared to the life his Master led.

"The mournful chant of the officiating priest re-echoed from vaulted-ceiling to paved aisles, filling the empty space with the sad sound; and alternately the thrilling tones of the voices in the choir, sang the hymns of the service. Madame Bonni, in an attitude of wrapt devotion, her head bowed down, still knelt at the sanctuary, and I at the base of the pillar. A magnificent painting of the crucifixion, hung over the altar; and upon the inanimate image of the Divine sufferer, I fixed my eyes. During the service, the incense had

been offered before the altar; the priest and boys had disappeared, bearing with them the consecrated host; and the last sweet cadences of the voices in the gallery were hushed, ere I aroused myself from my reverie. There was something beautifully solemn about that mass, celebrated at dawn; the classic interior of the church, built in the grecian style; its silence, the dim twilight which reigned, the sweet voices, concealed from view by the crimson silk curtains of the gallery, the elegant robes of the officiating priests and their attendants, and the grateful odor of frankincense and myrrh, with which the altar was perfumed, together formed a scene of impressive solemnity.

"One by one, the people stole away; we also departed. It was now bright day: two hours had elapsed during mass. Madame Bonni proposed, before returning home, to pay a visit to the convent of Sacre Cœur, to which the church belonged. I willingly assented, and accompanied her.

"It was an antique mass of brick, of almost shapeless form; so many different additions had at various times been made to the original edifice. The little iron-grated window, set in the middle of the strong, iron-barred gate, was opened by a small, thin-faced nun. She looked at us with a quick sharp glance; after Madame had spoken to her a moment, she turned away within the portal, leaving the window open, through which I was enabled to see the interior. It was a small anti-chamber, furnished with nothing, save the floor, the four walls, and three heavy oaken chairs, chained to the wall. After several questions had been asked by another nun, and responded to by the first, two or three bells rung, and other mysterious preliminaries gone through with, our nun devoutly crossed herself, and admitted us. Madame asked for the Lady Superior; we were conducted through several long narrow passages, to the convent parlor, where the nun left us, and went to summon her Superior. The room was small and dark, very plainly furnished with a waxed floor of dark wood, pictures of the saints on the walls, and an enormous crucifix in one corner. The chairs were chained to the walls, as in the anti-chamber; everything wore an air of monastic serenity. I heard the rustling of silk, and looking round, saw a tall, slender woman, thin, almost to attenuation. She wore the sombre dress of the order; the expression of her features was at once benevolent and austere; her eyes were blue, quiet, and grave; her face was of an oval form, and full; there was at once, shrewdness, benevolence, and sternness, all expressed and impressed upon that face.

"She greeted Madame Bonni with cordiality; me, with politeness;

in her right hand she carried a rosary of ivory beads, which, from time to time, she passed mechanically through her small white hands. Having seated herself upon a chair, she quietly regarded us.

"'We have called thus early, Mother Cecilia,' began Madame, in extenuation of our unseasonable visit, 'that we might obtain of you a permit to go through the convent on Wednesday next, my young friend being desirous of seeing it.'

"'Ah!' said she, fixing her eyes upon me, 'is she a stranger in Naples?'

"'She has been here but a short time.'

"The holy mother would probably have been horrified, had she known I was an actress. Ah, blind bigotry of party faith, of sectarianism; ye, who look at the occupation, the condition in life, without regarding the honesty, the character, the heart; the mind's the standard of the man or woman, and not the accidental contingencies of fortuitous or disadvantageous circumstances.

"'I will with pleasure give you a permit, and you need not apologise for the earliness of the hour, as we have long since begun the duties of the day; the sisters attend mass at three o'clock, in the chapel of the convent,' she continued, still looking at me. 'This young girl so forcibly reminds me of one of my beloved ones, who is now, I hope, in a state of beatitude, among the blessed around the throne of God. So great a resemblance do you bear to her, I almost thought when I entered, that it was herself revisiting earth; may I ask your name, Mademoiselle?'

"'Genevra Sfonza.'

"'Genevra,' she absently repeated, what a singular coincidence; it was under that name she took the veil and left the world; yes, she was a holy child; one of the few pure spirits which seem to emanate immediately from the bosom of our Heavenly Father: may she rest in peace, and her soul be made happy in the true faith.'

"She crossed herself; her lips moved: perhaps she murmured a prayer for her favorite.

"'Who was the young lady of whom you spoke, mother Cecilia?' inquired Madame Bonni.

"'She was Signorina Lavona Carraggi, daughter of Prince Carraggi, one of the oldest and noblest families in Naples: from early infancy she was ever pious, very attentive to her devotional exercises, and absented herself, as much as her high station would permit, from the vanities of the world: at sixteen, her father, yielding to her solicitations, consented she should take the white veil, which she did, but

died of consumption within the first year of her noviciate; but although she is gone from us for ever, her memory still lives in the hearts of the sisterhood, by whom she was tenderly beloved, and with justice, too, for surely she was an admirable being.'

"'I heard that it was some disappointment in an affair of the heart, which induced the Lady Lavona to leave the world,' observed Madame Bonni.

"'Ah, no!' replied the Abbess, with a pious shudder at the frightful imputation upon the character of her deceased favorite; 'that is mere report; she left the world for the solitude of the cloister, because she knew that its vanities and frivolities are incompatible with the practice of true religion, and she wished to become worthy of being the bride of Christ.'

"'What a mistaken notion of religion,' thought I, as I listened; 'surely, the simple fact that the benificent Creator has placed us here, sufficiently demonstrates that the world of society is our proper sphere of action, and not the seclusion and austerites of a convent.'

"'How long has the young lady been dead?' asked Madame.

"'It is now a year ago: she died on the Eve of the Annunciation, at midnight; while she was expiring in her cell, the nuns were celebrating midnight mass in the chapel; suddenly her apparition appeared unto them, standing in their midst, and then as suddenly vanished away; by this miracle they knew that her spirit had departed, and it would seem as if, lingering on the verge of eternity, it came back to take a last farewell of that sisterhood by whom she was so much beloved. Upon going to her cell, I found her quite dead, sustained in the arms of the nun who nursed her. She is buried in the garden of the convent, and on reception days numerous visitors come to see her grave.'

"My faith was not of sufficient india-rubber-like expansion to embrace the miraculous apparition; but I could easily understand and appreciate the fact, that the young lady had been beautiful and lovely, and that her death was regretted by those who knew and loved her.

"After a few remarks, mutually exchanged, upon indifferent topics, the Superior wrote a permit for Wednesday, and we rose to go. At parting, she pressed my hand in hers, and again exclaimed,

"'Ah! what resemblance; I should think it was herself: farewell, my daughter, and if, in after years, the world and its frivolities satiate and disgust you,—if your soul becomes weary with the cares of life,—come then to the peaceful shade of the cloister; here you will find quiet and repose.'

"'I am too young, yet, to have become tired of a world which I am only beginning to see.'

"'So thought I, at your age; not so do I regard it now; and I look back with regret upon those years spent in idle pleasures, which I should have dedicated to the service of God. Few young people possess sufficient self-denial to practice the austerities of religion. Lady Lavona was a brilliant exception: she left a high station, the pomp and glitter of nobility, to bear her cross and follow her Saviour.'

"There was something solemn and impressive in the look and manner of the Abbess, as she spoke these grave words of advice; her face, marble-like when in repose, lit up when she spoke, like those beautiful Chinese vases, which only show the flowers painted upon the exterior when filled with water within.

"'Good morning, mother Cecilia.'

"'Farewell, daughter: the peace of God be with you.' The attendant nun conducted us back the way we came, the heavy portal opened and shut behind us, and we directed our steps homeward.

"The appearance and conversation of the Superior made a deep impression on my mind. All the way home I thought of what she had said about the lady whom I resembled; her description of her loveliness and purity of life had interested me, still I had no desire to emulate her example of sanctity, and become a nun; I have always thought the life of a religieuse a useless one; to be pure, virtuous, and truly religious, it is not necessary to seclude oneself from society within a convent's walls, perform penance and say prayers a hundred times a day; the duties of a sincere, upright and active life, are the best offerings we can make our Almighty Father, and, I feel confident, the most acceptable him.

"Monsieur Belmont had breakfasted and gone out, when we reached home; we took ours; then Madame left me to attend to her domestic affairs, and I went to my room to practice my part in a new opera. I had been engaged thus two or three hours, when, looking out of my window, I saw a calesso drive up and stop before the door; my teacher got out, accompanied by a female, dressed in white, and enveloped in an enormous black lace veil. I caught a glimpse of her tiny feet as she lightly tripped out. Something familiar struck my memory as I glanced at that veiled form, an indefinite association of something or some one, I could not tell which, or what. They quickly entered the house, and I continued my musical studies, imagining it was some visitor of Madame's, when Arla requested me to come to the parlor, a lady wished to see me. Many gentlemen had visited me since my

arrival in Naples, but possessing not a single female acquaintance in the city, I puzzled myself in conjecture.

"Wondering who it could be, I descended the stairs; the sound of merry voices and laughter greeted my ears from the parlour: on entering it, I saw a group of three, standing in the middle of the room, their backs toward me. The lady I had seen from the window, was playfully arranging upon Monsieur's broad shoulders her large lace veil; my guardian was gayly conversing, while Madame stood by talking and laughing with Italian enthusiasm. They formed a happy-looking, graceful trio. I paused a moment to look at them. The lady, happening to turn her head, saw me, uttered an exclamation of surprise, dropped the veil, and we rushed into each other's arms;—it was Blanche!

"'Ah!' cried Monsieur, still trembling with laughter, from some unknown cause, 'now I know Genevra will be happy; she has been wishing and longing for your arrival. Are you not mutually glad to see each other?'

"'Ah, yes,' answered Blanche, as she raised her head from my shoulder, and uplifted her beautiful dewy eyes to mine. 'Genevra knows as well, better than I can tell her, how very happy I am at seeing her once more, after so many years of separation.'

"I said nothing myself, for it has ever been my nature to say the least when I feel most. And now, after the first congratulations were over, I looked at Blanche, to see what effect Time had wrought on her. She had grown much taller, and her form was rounder in its voluptuous beautiful outlines; her face still preserved its old expression of infantile innocence and sweetness, yet there was something altered about it: and, on attentively criticizing that fair face, I perceived a slight expression of scorn in the almost imperceptible curl of the delicate upper lip, and a melancholy languor, bordering on gloom, in the blue depths of those large eyes. Had some disappointment crossed her, or was she already weary of the world's applause? She was a very handsome woman,—no wonder she should be admired.

"Her laugh was the same as ever; her merry, child-like laugh; how often had that joyous sound amused me amid the monotony of school discipline!

"Oh, my beloved friend! my beautiful Blanche! years have rolled their dark mists on my soul since that re-union. I have lived to weep over thy solitary grave: thy only mourner the hoarse resounding waves of the sea. That graceful form has long ago been food for worms: those lovely eyes glazed in death, and those long ringlets rotted to

decay;—yet, whenever I recall thy gentleness, thy winning ways, and lofty soul, tears will start from their briny bed, to consecrate with grief thy sweet memory. Yes, if there be 'a land of pure delight' beyond this terrestial sphere, I feel assured thy blest shade has entered beatitude.

"We went up stairs together to my room, and there she gave me a description of the principal events in her life since leaving Vienna. She was too sincerely unaffected and devoid of egotism to entertain me with her own conquests or matrimonial offers; but she spoke with tenderness of Inez; her well maintained popularity; her good temper; her still cherished fondness for myself; and, lastly, her approaching marriage with a wealthy merchant of Berlin, and consequent withdrawal from the stage.

"'It is really true, then,' I remarked, 'that she is to be married. I heard so, but did not know how true the report might be. And you, Blanche, have you any idea of following her example?'

"A rose-tint, like the delicate hue of one of ocean's shells, lingered for an instant on the snowy cheek of Blanche. It quickly disappeared, and she gravely, I thought, almost sorrowfully, replied:

"'My dear Genevra, I seldom bestow a thought on matrimony. To say that I *never* think of marrying, would be an absurdity. All women *must* think sometimes of that which is most certainly their manifest destiny; but my thoughts dwell but seldom on that subject. Single life presents no terrors to me: and you know actresses scarcely ever have an opportunity of marrying any save a professional character. Inez is an extraordinary instance of virtue and beauty being rewarded; and most fortunate is she in having obtained so generous and fine a gentleman for her future husband.'

"'Monsieur Belmont told me your beauty and your voice has set all Naples wild,' she continued. 'Is it so, dear? But I need not ask; the journals informed me of that fact. And does the applause that greets you in public fully satisfy your heart? Do you never come home to the solitude of your own room, from these grand triumphs, and there, safe from the observation of others, sit and dream, and long for something, you scarce can divine *what* yourself; and *then*, do you not feel how brilliant, yet how isolated, are the lives we actresses lead? Have you never felt so?'

"'Often,' I replied, staring at her in amazement, at the sympathy of mind there evidently existed between us. 'Yes, I have often felt so, although I am as yet on the outset of my new career. But I imagined I alone had this misanthropy;—I little thought you shared

it; but let us banish all these gloomy reflections, which can do no good, and only tend to sadden us, and speak of something more cheerful; and now I want to ask about Munich, as I never was there. What sort of town is it?'

"'A very beautiful, delightful place, to those who fancy it. It contains many very splendid buildings, fine gardens, and much good society. I was so constantly engaged in my profession, however, I scarcely noticed what it was; and in truth, since I left you I have been in so many places, that they seem all alike to me, and one town is as agreeable as another.'

"Here our conversation for the moment was suspended, and Blanche, at our hostess' request, went to take some refreshments after her journey, but I plainly perceived, both from the words and looks of my friend, that there was something wrong at heart; either the gay world had wearied her, or else some disappointed or clandestine love was gnawing at her heart. Which it was, I could not decide; so I trusted to events to develope this mystery,

"Blanche became completely domesticated with us, and we were to each other as sisters; yet she did not confide to me the cause of this concealed sadness. In the meantime, Monsieur de Serval became a regular visiter of mine. I presented him to Blanche,—he seemed pleased with her, yet I perceived that, although he treated her with respectful admiration, his eyes never rested on her with the same expression of love and tenderness as they always did when wandering after me. They say 'that love begets love.' To a certain extent I think the saying true; and perhaps the eager admiration of Monsieur de Serval quickened my perception of his merits, and gave him additional interest in my eyes. Be that as it may, my feelings had not as yet shaped themselves into a downright sentiment of love. They were as yet in embryo, quiescent friendship, when a strange and unexpected event turned the current of my destiny.

"I was sitting alone in the little parlor before mentioned. Blanche had a headache, and was in her own room. Monsieur was away somewhere,—he generally spent his evenings out; and Madame Bonni had left the apartment. I sat alone: it was now midsummer; the weather was extremely hot; but I recollect on the evening of which I speak, a brisk north breeze had sprung up at twilight, and blown steadily off the shore for several hours, rendering the air quite chill and cool. The wind sighed drearily around the little cottage, and seemed to dwell momentarily in the tall poplar trees of the garden.

"One wax candle, from its silver candelabra, shed a subdued light

around, in its immediate vicinity, leaving the rest of the room in shadow, and the full moon, from a window opposite me, darted long streaks of silver rays along the floor; my book had fallen from my hand, being unable to read by the feeble light, and with my hands folded together in my lap, I was lost in contemplation, when a knock came at the door, and without waiting for permission, it was opened, and Monsieur de Serval entered. He did not look as well as usual, nor was his toilette as carefully made. He scarcely returned my salutation, and drawing a chair near me, seated himself in it, and leaning back, with his small right hand, pushed back from his forehead the glossy waves of his flaxen hair.

"I spoke of several things: the opera, political debates, fashionable literature; he answered abstractedly in monosylables, and then relapsed into silence. Suddenly starting from his chair, he began pacing the room with rapid strides; his face looked flushed and strange. I had always felt toward him an indefinite fear, arising probably from the magnetic influence of his stern temper, and now the same sensation came creeping over me as I sat, and wonderingly gazed upon the singular behaviour of my visiter. Suddenly pausing in his walk, he came toward me, and again seated himself at my side. He grasped both my hands in his, and bent the stern gaze of his lustrous eyes on mine. I now began to apprehend what was coming, and to tremble.

"'Genevra,' said he, in the low, deep tone of impassioned feeling, —and as he said this, he took both my hands in his left hand, and with the other he played with the curls of my hair—'Genevra, I am about leaving town, perhaps for some months; perhaps from contingency or fatality I may never return to Parthenope. I have come to say farewell. I could, I think, almost feel happy at going, could I for a moment suppose that a heart so pure as yours, would cherish towards a forlorn, unhappy being like myself a single sentiment of kindness or regret. Say, Mademoiselle, may I hope I shall not be forgotten?'

"He grasped my hands fiercely as he said this, and looked closely in my face. I felt frightened, and scarcely knew what to say. At last I stammered out,—

"'You have my best wishes, Monsieur, for your future happiness.'

"'Best wishes! Is that all? Yes, I see I was a fool to suppose—' He stopped abruptly, and bending down his stately head to a level with my eyes, riveted his gaze on mine. I could feel his warm breath hotly fan my cheek, and the beams of moonlight showed his broad full chest as it rose and fell with contending passions. Nearer and

nearer did he draw me to him, till his head sank upon my shoulder, his beautiful mouth sought mine, and with his arms tightly clasped around my waist, I felt myself irresistibly drawn into an embrace, which, by a strange paralyzation of all power of will, I had no strength to avoid. He drew me forcibly off my chair upon his lap, and there imprinted on my lips a hundred kisses before I could summon strength and determination to break away. I forced myself from his iron grasp and ran to the other side of the room. He followed me, his beautiful face distorted by passion, and falling on his knees, again seized my hands in his, and exclaimed,—'Pardon me—oh! pardon me, beautiful Genevra! but I love you with a wild, intense passion. Forgive me if I have offended your pride or modesty. Take pity on me, Genevra, and encourage me to hope that my love may meet with a return.'

"'Monsieur de Serval!' I cried, at length recovering breath to speak, 'your conduct is incomprehensible, inexplicable:—what *can* you mean by it? Is it gentlemanly—is it honorable, thus wantonly to insult the modesty and wound the pride of a defenceless girl?'

"'By Jupiter, you misconstrue me!" he vehemently exclaimed; and starting to his feet, he again traversed the room with rapid strides. 'Has my bearing toward you ever been anything save respectful?'

"'Does not this look marvellously like insulting familiarity?' I indignantly demanded.

"'I forgot myself for a moment. And are you so remorseless as to refuse forgiveness for an unintentional fault? Yes, here in this very room, bear me witness, all ye gods and goddesses, all ye saints and angels:—I do swear I love you, and you alone. With a crazy passion have I adored since our first meeting at the countess';—till now I have stifled it, concealed it as much as possible from your observation; but now, on the eve of departure from Naples, I tell you how I love you, and honorably offer you my heart and hand in marriage. If you will accept me, I will return; otherwise, I presume, I never shall.'

"I had sunk into a chair, overpowered by this strange scene. Again, as if impelled by some invisible influence, he came and put his arms around my waist, and kissed me as before. This time, after what he had just said, I did not resist him.

"'I have sometimes thought,' he whispered, 'from the expression of your eyes, that you loved me. Say, dearest, is it so? Put your beautiful arms around my neck, and say, 'Dear Rinaldo, I love thee!'

"Unconscious, almost stupefied, I mechanically complied, and whispered after him, 'Dear Rinaldo, I love thee!' Then he remained motionless for some minutes, seeming to have lost all recollection in a

delirium of sense, his arms tightly locked around my waist, his head resting in my lap. His wild, impassioned manner had in some degree magnetized, and inspired my naturally cold temperament with something like a return of the volcano-like passion which animated him.

"'Monsieur de Serval,' I said, finding he made no effort to rise, 'recollect yourself, I beg of you. Come, seat yourself here on the sofa, and let us talk quietly. Why should you rage and storm thus? What is it disquiets you? You say you love me; but surely love is a gentle feeling. Where is the necessity of these tempestuous emotions? These bursts of passion alarm me. Be composed, and tell me why you are miserable and unhappy, as you just said you were. Explain your grief; and at least let me endeavor to console you.'

"My quiet manner served to soothe him. He rose from his knees, and sat reclining on the sofa, still holding my hands in his, while I wiped the perspiration from his agitated countenance. I was not exactly in love with him then, but my disposition always prompted me to compassionate the sorrowful. He appeared to be unhappy, and I would have given much to have known, shared, and alleviated his sorrow.

"'You never heard, I suppose,' he began, 'anything of my private history?'

"'No,' I hesitatingly replied, 'I never did.'

"'You are not used to equivocating; I see that, Genevra. I am certain that you *have* heard from envious tongues, every thing that is bad concerning me,—that I am a *roué;* a gambler; a worthless, reckless man of fashion. My faults I do not pretend to conceal. Not to acknowledge an error, is only worthy of a knave or a fool. I trust I am not either. Sit nearer me;—let me hold your hand and see my eyes riding on the balls of yours. Now I will begin. I will go back in imagination—thank God I am not obliged to do it in reality—to childhood.'

CHAPTER VII.

"My father was descended from an ancient and noble family; one of the most aristocratic in France. Our family chateau was in Normandy; there we spent the principal part of the year, with the exception of visits to Paris at distant intervals of time.

"Our chateau was beautifully and romantically situated on a gentle plain. From its fine grounds I have often watched the sun decline behind the distant mountains, which bordered on the east our valley-home; on the west a gentle river glided by: along its flowery banks, oft, when a child, have I, my two brothers, and little sister, played. I shall never see its quiet waters more,—nor would I: they would revive too many painful associations. Yet sometimes in fancy I transport myself back to its loved shores; and again I see Francois, Pierre, myself, and Lelia, all animated by the same childish love of fun, playing hide and seek, or running races.

"Francois was the eldest, myself next, then Pierre, then our sweet sister Lelia. My beloved mother, to whose memory I have ever retained, through all my dissipations and frivolities, so great a veneration, was in declining health. She was a tall, beautiful blonde; her gentle face was the index to her soul,—all purity, sweetness and sincerity; were I to live a thousand years, never could I forget my mother's amiability, her true nobility of soul. I was her favorite child, her 'dear Rinaldo.' At my birth, in a fit of romantic admiration of the fabulous Rinaldo, of Italian story, she named me after him, and with woman's romance, fondly pictured to herself the great deeds I should one day perform. In emulation of this poetical demi-god, what would not children become were they to realize their parents' wishes and expectations.

"My father and mother lived together in the greatest love and unanimity of feeling, until the advent of a governess, when Lelia was eight years old, to superintend her education. This woman, as sly and insinuating, as she was bold and unprincipled, soon sowed the seeds of contention between my parents, and alienated from the forsaken wife the lawful affections of her husband. She was not handsome, but she succeeded by art, in acquiring over my father's mind an almost unlimited control. He forsook my mother's society, and surrendered himself to the fatal influence of Mademoiselle Desportes. My

mother was left to linger on and die alone, in her own solitary apartments of the chateau.

"Little Lelia became fonder of her governess than of her mother, and preferred at all times being with Mademoiselle, than with the desolate and despairing Madame de Serval. Francois and Pierre, seduced by presents and unlimited indulgence, grew to love her. I alone, of the whole family, remained firm in my allegiance to my best parent. I alone spent hour after hour, day after day, by her lone bedside, endeavoring to soothe the saddened spirit, and calm its approach to eternity. My unfailing devotion to her, gained me the bitter enmity of our governess; but I defied and despised her malice. My father from that time henceforward, till his death, regarded me with an eye of distrust; but for that too I did not care: I felt convinced that he had forfeited all claim to the title of husband or father; that he had debased himself by a vulgar, dishonorable connection; disgraceful alike to himself and the ancient name he bore. I owed my first duty to the deserted, not to the deserter; I saw that this disgrace to her sex, aimed at my father's hand; that she wished to establish herself firmly in a high position; who the man was mattered little to her, so long as he possessed rank and wealth; and, unfortunately, for my opinion of women, I have seen but too many others like unto her. My mother was a stumbling block to her ambition; I saw all the manœuvring that was constantly going on through this woman's influence; yet what could I do, a young boy, without money or influence in society? If a man chooses to turn against his own wife, the mother of his children; abuse, neglect her, and take instead, a bad, intriguing woman, as confidant and companion, what can the world say or do? nothing, it is their own affair: every one says, let them settle it between them: the public have nothing to do with family quarrels.

"Thus defenceless and unprotected, her parents dead, her relations far away, my mother became a victim to this vile creature. Her health declined with amazing rapidity during the first year of this woman's arrival; her hectic cough increased daily; her pale and hollow cheeks, glassy eyes, and shrunken form, like a scroll of shriveled parchment, showed the ravages of disease and gloom, preying upon both mind and body. A little incident first gave me a horrid suspicion of the secret cause of this decay.

"A physician from the village, and a mysterious looking monk from a neighboring convent, regularly visited my mother twice a week; the one to attend to her spiritual welfare, the other to administer to her wreck of mortal frame. Father Ignatius I never liked; no love

was lost between us; my sentiments were freely returned; his step, gliding and noiseless; his large eyes, always downcast with mock humility, and hands clasped upon his breast, always inspired me with a presentiment of the vicinage of some evil genius. Mystery, I have observed, is generally the cloak of ignorant or knavish minds; in this case it was the latter. I felt relieved when I saw his draperied form leave the chateau, as if some evil influence had been withdrawn. Notwithstanding my dislike, he seemed to be a favorite of my mother's, and to please her I forbore saying any thing to his disparagement. His conversation seemed to amuse and momentarily enliven her; his voice was soft and low, and manner insinuating and jesuitical. I said nothing against him to her or any one else, though secretly distrustful, for I would not have added to her gloom, around whose soul were gathering fast the shadows of the tomb.

"I was retiring to my mother's room one evening at dusk, when as I neared the anti-chamber, I heard voices within conversing, and my own name mentioned; pausing at the door, and concealed by its deep shadow, I listened; the speakers were Doctor Theodori, and Father Ignatius; they appeared to have met accidentally.

"'Well, Doctor,' was the jocose salutation of Ignatius, 'how fares thy patient?'

"'And may I not ask the same question of thee, oh, physician of the soul?' was the laughing reply of the fat, shrewd-looking Theodori.

"'Between us two,' said the monk, glancing round the anti-chamber, as if to observe they were free from notice; the dusk of twilight far advanced, reigned, and they could not see me; 'between us, I say, she is failing fast: the last few months have wrought a great change.'

"'I plainly perceive it,' was the cool reply of his worthy colleague; 'she will not cumber the earth long, nor be in the way of Monsieur and Mademoiselle Desportes.'

"'You should be careful not to give the powders too often,—their effect will excite suspicion,' was the next remark of the holy father.

"'Trust me, I know what I am doing; this is not the first case of the kind I have managed; there will be no outward sign except the usual appearance of disease; what has been promised you as reward, may I ask?'

"'His influence at Rome with the college of cardinals, to obtain me the position of the nuncio to the court of Vienna, and yours, *worthy* Theodori?'

"'When all is over, I shall accompany the naval expedition to Al-

giers; in truth I scarcely feel safe in this affair; I sometimes catch myself feeling my head, to ascertain if that important member still performs its functions.'

"'No matter, ejaculated the man of prayer, penance and fasting, so long as we are rewarded for our services, and get safe out of the country, which I am very desirous of leaving. But does not his infatuation appear strange to you?—to me it is a riddle.

"'A problem, in my opinion, which I could never solve; but these sly women do sometimes, you know, obtain great influence; he is weak and infatuated; but men have been fooled before his time, and will be so for ages yet unborn.'

"'How long do you think she will live?' asked the monk; and he drew his cowl over his dark visage, and took a step forward toward the door, where I stood concealed.

"'Not longer than three months, if I am anything of a physician.' They both laughed, as two fiends may be supposed to laugh over a captured soul, and withdrew through a side door, leading to my father's part of the mansion.

"The last echo of their footsteps died upon my ear, ere I tremblingly emerged from my concealment; pale as a ghost from the tomb, and quivering like an aspen, I comprehended perfectly well that some dark plot was hatching to expedite my mother's mortal doom. I tried to think of some means to counter-work this devilish intention; but at that time almost a child, my mind was not fertile in expedients, and even had I equaled Mephistopheles at planning, what is the use of invention without the power to execute. I determined to watch and endeavor to detect any attempt this triumvirate of wickedness should make upon her life. I childishly supposed I should *see* something to expose; I did not know their secret wiles, though I watched constantly, and was always with my mother; yet I saw no powders given, nothing visible indicated *their* secret malice, and *her* onward progress to the grave.

"Mademoiselle Desportes, with cunning hypocrisy, came often with professions of regard, to see Madame de Serval. Could I have had my way, I would have kicked her out the room; but perhaps she chose the better part, in treating with contempt so unworthy a creature; for that pure soul, which was all harmony and love, could surely feel no rivalry with one so immeasurably beneath her.

"My father seldom came to our apartment. I should have thought shame would have deterred him from brazenly insulting the deserted wife with his presence. I forgot that the man who could act thus,

would of necessity be incapable of shame. Thus lingered for three months longer my gentle, lovely mother, and then she died, devoutly hoping to be reunited to her loved ones in a future state of being. She died at midnight; we, her children, and the nurse, her only attendants; it was in the autumn time, and the wind blew in fitful gusts around the isolated chateau; the mournful sound, as the blast rose and fell, and whistled through the forest trees, and through the cracks and crevices of the wainscotting, seemed in harmony with the sad departing soul.

"She sat upright in bed, supported by pillows: her hands convulsively clasped on her sunken chest, her sad blue eyes fixed on vacancy, as if seeking to penetrate the impenetrable mysteries of eternity; her long hair, escaped from its confinement, strayed wildly around her shoulders: thus she sat, motionless and silent, for several hours, though not speechless; she retained her voice and senses to the last.

"Little Lelia sat on the bed by my mother's side, and with tearful eyes gazed wonderingly on her parent; my brothers and I stood by the bedside; I, speechless, tearless, from intense grief: they, sobbing in loud lamentation; and the old nurse sat in the chimney corner, an uninterested, yet sympathizing spectator of the death bed. My father had made an excuse of going on a hunting party, some days previous, to avoid witnessing his wife's last sufferings; and his wicked favorite had shut herself in her own rooms: we, therefore, were the sole attendants. And the priest and his delightful friend had gone, I know not where—probably departed for their respective places of destination—apprehensive of discovery.

"The old brass clock in the antichamber struck the midnight hour, and its hoarse, reverberating tone, had scarcely ceased, ere Madame de Serval aroused herself from her stupor; decaying life appeared to resuscitate, momentarily, in that attenuated form, like the spasmodic flicker of a lamp, whose flame is about to be extinguished. She extended her arms, as if beckoning to the shades—uplifted her eyes, as if praying for grace—then, suddenly breaking the portentous silence which had hung over us so long, she said, 'Dear children, beloved little ones, come close to me.' We gathered close around her. 'Your poor mother is going the way of all the earth—she is going to leave you—and her memory will be as though she never had been. I entreat you to be kind to each other; to love and cherish each other's friendship, practice virtue and good works, that ye may become worthy of heavenly rewards, and meet your mother above.'

"Her face was animated with almost supernatural energy for an

instant; she pointed upwards with her finger for an instant, then her clay-cold fingers shrank from my clasp: she fell backward on her pillow; her eyes were glazed in the mists of death; and they, hardened in their expression, became fixed and cold; her arms stiffened, and fell rigid to her side: her whole form collapsed and changed. Death had claimed its own; all was over: the wrongs she had endured, her joys, her sorrows, were like a tale that is told; they were lost in the womb of time—past and forgotten.

"Petrified with fear to the spot—horror struck—we gazed upon the inanimate clay; then, after the first spasm of terror was past, we rushed to the nurse, and gathered round her, seeking consolation for that loss, which no power—mortal, or immortal—could restore to us.

"We wept ourselves to sleep that night, in our respective chambers. I, more than all the rest, felt wretched. God alone knows how miserable I was. And when I recalled my mother's gentleness, her forbearance, her enduring love for a worthless man, *and its reward*, oh! that added the last bitter drop in the cup of wo!

"My father returned next day; he seemed neither surprised nor grieved when told of her death: how should he be, when he had planned, and premeditated it: 'her health had been so feeble within the last two years,' he said, 'the event was not an unexpected one.' Mademoiselle came not near us, and, absorbed in grief, I had forgotten her very existence.

"When the corpse was laid out, we all went to take a last fond look of that loved form, and bid it a temporary, perhaps eternal, adieu.

"She lay in state upon a costly bier, dressed as for a bridal. The white satin robe she was attired in, was not whiter than her marble face and hands: the wreath upon her hair scarcely outvied them in purity of color; and her face bore that expression of almost unearthly beauty, which rests upon the faces of the dead the first few hours after death. So calm, so pure and beautiful did she look, I almost thought her sleeping, and imagined I saw the grave-clothes rise and fall, with the respiration of life, upon that dead bosom. Oh, my mother! wert thou concious of the tears I shed, thou wouldst have pitied me!"

Monsieur de Serval paused; his voice was inarticulate from emotion. Dropping my hand, he covered his face with both his, and trembled with grief. A man is generally ashamed to show such feelings before a woman; but the recollections of his youth had completely unmanned him. I thought it indelicate to proffer words of condolence, and, therefore, waited till he became quieted, and went on.

"The grief of my two brothers and sister partook more of wonder

and fear than sorrow; but my soul was literally devoured with despair, and at that moment I most sincerely wished myself dead and buried with her. I had lost my best friend: the only one who could console my boyish vexations and advise my actions.

"A splendid marble tomb was erected over the broken heart it enshrined, in the cemetery of the church belonging to the chateau, and an epitaph inscribed, testifying to the virtues of the departed, and the inconsolability of the bereaved widower. How I despised the man, even though my own father, who could thus add hypocrisy to villany!

"Within three months after her death, he outraged even the usual conventional forms of mourning, and espoused the governess. From that time henceforth, completely throwing off the mask of affection she had previously worn, my brothers and sister, as well as myself, felt her iron rule. We were aliens and strangers in our own home: all obeyed the imperious will of the new Madame de Serval;—we were neglected and left alone.

"Through her influence on the mind of her husband, he decided on sending me away to college. Me she most particularly disliked, and on all occasions treated me with studied contempt. There was a tacit understanding between us that we mutually understood each other. *She* knew me to possess penetration: *I felt* that she was a vile intriguante. She saw it would be far better for her control over my brothers and sister, that I should be away. My elder brother, Francois, was never very bright. Pierre (younger than myself) was no more so than need be: he was extremely amiable and easily influenced; and Lelia, any one could manage. Of the whole four I was most capable of resistance; consequently it was most desirable to get me out of the way.

"A celebrated college, in a distant district, was selected as my destination, and the day appointed for my departure. I asked if Francois could not be sent to the same college for the completion of his education, that we might be companions to each other in our studies. My request was sternly refused by my father, and I was bade attend to my own busines, and not trouble myself about Francois's movements. Thus silenced, I made a merit of necessity, and obeyed, because I could not help myself, resolving mentally, however, that, when grown to man's estate, I would shake off the underhand tyranny of this woman, and enlist in the army as a foot soldier, sooner than submit to her petty malice. She planned this merely to annoy me, knowing the society of my brother would be pleasing to me

What my father intended doing with either him or Pierre, neither they nor I knew: Lelia would remain under the guardianship of her former governess.

"Thus were we separated. I bade them farewell and departed, glad to be removed from the evil atmosphere of a depraved woman.

"I soon became a favorite with my preceptors at the institution. Francois corresponded with me regularly the first year. Little Lelia, he said, was in delicate health; her stepmother treated her with harshness and severity; Pierre drooped in listless languor. He was in daily expectation of being ordered off to join his regiment,—father having bought him a commission in the 49th hussars. Of his own feelings, or the state of affairs between Monsieur de Serval and his wife, he never spoke; perhaps, I thought, he had forgotten our mother's wrongs, grown politic, conciliated the kindness of his stepmother, and consequently was more tolerated; but I hoped not. I trusted the remembrance of the injuries of that angel-woman were too deeply impressed on his mind, to allow him to be so easily seduced into love or kindness to her betrayer. The tone of his letters was reckless and gloomy: these feelings I regretted seeing in one so young, and wished he were within the sphere of my influence, that I might win him to better things.

"Subsequently I heard from him after his arrival in the Barbary States, whither he had been ordered. He described the climate as being insupportably hot, and a soldier's life a hard one; yet, having entered the service, was determined to remain and fight his way to distinction.

"The large patrimony my mother brought my father, had, upon her ill-starred marriage, been exclusively settled on herself (subject to her control alone), and, at her death, she bequeathed it to her children, divided equally amongst us. Upon the completion of my education, I paid a short visit home, to claim my share of the patrimony, and see my brother and sister. Lelia, grown tall and graceful, welcomed me with joy; my father, with cold civility; the ex-governess, with haughty coldness. When I inquired for Pierre, they directed me to the ch[illegible] where my mother reposed, and where her youngest son r[illegible] by her side, in the blessed sleep of forgetfulness. I [illegible] over his grave with the same wild lamentation with [illegible] bewailed her loss: on the contrary, as I stood over the [illegible] which held the human earth, I almost felt a secret satis- [illegible] at the boy had been taken away from the evils to come;

that his pure young mind had not remaind here to become contaminated by mingling with inferior, less elevated souls.

"Lelia told me how he died of a fever, and how he had wished to see me; but was ungratified in the wish in his dying hour. Father had commanded that no word should be sent me of his illness or death; thus I had remained in ignorance of either. When she told me this, a suspicion flashed across me, that, perhaps, he had been dealt with like his poor mother; but reflection convinced me that his stepmother could have had no object in putting him out of the world. He was an amiable, inoffensive boy; he interfered with her in no way; and as she was a woman of strong mind and good reasoning faculties, it was not probable she would have committed a deed, the execution of which could in no way have benefited her. At any rate he was dead; and as I looked on Lelia, her youth, her beauty, and the atmosphere of innocence and grace which seemed to hover round and adorn her, I wondered what destiny had in store for her, and I prayed that the angel-shade of our mutual parent—or some other invisible inhabitant of a better land—might preside over her future years, and shield them from all evil.

"But the halls of my ancestors were no longer a home for me, and I felt it strongly during the few days I spent there. The absurd spectacle of the blind infatuation of a man, already on the decline of life, who fed and cherished his vanity into the ridiculous belief that he was still loveable and beloved by a young and artful woman, was —had I been an uninterested spectator of the farce—more laughable than anything else; but, as it was, indignation, instead of merriment, stirred my feelings, and I wished to be out of sight of so disgraceful an exhibition of superannuated folly; and my father, while doting upon his minion, and squandering his fortune upon her in every description of extravagance, actually believed himself to be as attractive and fascinating as any young man of twenty-five. When I recurred to this portion of my father's life in after years, I always thought of what a young Parisian girl once said to me: 'Are not those two words, man and vanity, synonymous?' That young and handsome men should be vain of conquest is not astonishing; but that old men, hackneyed and worn, from misuse of the senses, possessing all the vices of the young, without their personal attractions or their virtues,—that *such* men should be candidates for the affections of young women, or dare to suppose they can obtain or possess them, is scarcely more reprehensible than ridiculous. The world has always seemed to me a perfect farce—a play: a stage on which all act, and those who play the best are thought the

best in the eyes of the undiscriminating world. What part my father and his favorite would have taken in the drama, I am unable to say; but my own opinion is, that a fool's cap for him, and the symbol of knavery for her, would have suited to a charm.

"Lelia was liberally provided with many attendants, teachers for various languages, and every thing the child could wish in the way of dress or equipage. Being satisfied that her welfare and comfort was attended to, I arranged with father to draw upon his banker in Paris for my means; and, bidding Lelia farewell—who sobbed and wept grievously at my departure—I glanced good-bye to the turreted towers, the lofty archways and imposing battlements of the homes of my forefathers, and took my way to the capital of France, intending to pursue the study of the law.

"But, alas! for the self-promised virtue of youth and inexperience! I had not been in the gay city many weeks before the giddy vortex of Parisian society had enthralled me, and overcame many of my stoical resolves: so little do we know what we shall do until tasked by practice. I at first wondered at the wild and unrestrained dissipations of the youth of the metropolis; but, insensibly, by degrees this wonderment ceased, as I became accustomed to, and shared in these frivolities.

"An old lawyer—in former years a devoted friend of my father—now, in turn, performed the offices of friend to me; *i. e.* gave me good advice on the temptations and snares of life; the dangers of love affairs, particularly illicit ones; the beauty of propriety of demeanor; the respectability of religion—at least its external appearance, no matter about the *sincerity* of the heart; and, lastly, the propriety of placing myself under his guidance, and steadfastly following his counsels. Fortunately, I did not take advantage of the kindness extended me; for, had I followed his counsels—or, rather, what one might suppose *would* have been his counsels, twenty years before—I should have been engulphed in ruin long ago. I followed the dictates of a young, and, at that time, pure heart; and pursued my own way, naturally enough concluding, that every man has a right to his own way of thinking, and his own rule of action, provided he interfered with no one else.

"I studied law with my *moral* friend for some time; and might at this moment, perhaps, have been an advocate, had not unforeseen events changed the current of my life otherwise.

"While in Paris I became acquainted with a lady of noble rank and ancient family; and, since I am giving you a faithful chronicle

of my days, Genevra, I will not conceal from you, that once, and once only, have I loved, in by gone years, a lady, as beautiful, though not as virtuous, or talented, as yourself—loved, I say, as fondly, as blindly, as I now love you.

"Her name was Madame Anacharsis Valliere; and she was the youthful wife of an old banker; she was then one of the most fashionable and admired of any in Paris. I first met her at a ball, and afterwards visited her at her house constantly. I cannot describe the artlessness and playful witchery of her ways, nor that light and play of feature which allured and captivated me—even though I saw the risk I ran, both for myself and her: the remembrance of her haunted me for years after the love had died away, and both passion, and the reciprocity it had met with from her confiding fondness, had faded from my mind.

"That was my first 'grande passion!' The woman who pleased me then, would not please me now: so do our tastes and habits change as we go onward: but then, young and warm, yet shy, I required to be led on to love: now, I would rather seek it myself: consequently, I prefer one who rather shrinks from than advances to me.

"Her husband, absorbed in business, and money speculations could not find time to devote much attention to his fair wife; and, trusting to her honor, her sense of duty, and shrinking modesty, to preserve her in the right way, he allowed her to do as she pleased, and go with whom she pleased; it often pleased her then to go with me. He had great confidence in me; I am sorry to say it was misplaced; but undesignedly, at least, I can with conscience say that, I did not intend to love the wife, or injure the husband. When I first became acquainted with them, little by little she grew to love me; if I did not come at the appointed hour, Madame Anacharsis, forgetting her embroidery, music, flowers, visitors, everything, would sit at the window facing the street, whence she regularly expected me, and muse and watch for me; then the sudden start, the smile of welcome when I came, the tears which suffused her eyes when I departed, by all these tokens, and a hundred others, I knew as well as words could speak it, that she loved me; what man is virtuous enough to slight the manifest love of a beautiful woman? I saw my triumph and I felt happy, for my feelings echoed hers.

"I then became her constant visitor, her devoted admirer; I was with her continually, at her morning concerts, her evening soirees: I was ever at her side. The old husband, infatuated in his idolatry of his young wife, saw nothing, suspected nothing; thus we went on till

passion crowned the whole; nothing was left for me to wish for. Was I happy then? In the possession of all that I had thought so admirable, so angelic, I have often asked myself that question, and never have been able to answer it satisfactorily. I lost myself then in the mysteries of love, and forgot everything but her.

"We had been wrapt up, bound up in each other for the space of three months, and the old man still blundered on in confidence, though I was ever at his wife's side like her shadow. He frequently consulted me on business matters, and both in public and private, expressed the highest opinion of me. I could not but regret the moment when he would be undeceived, and perceive the *real* state of things; yet the whole affair had been involuntarily on both sides. Society, which always decides so arbitrarily in these matters, would at once have pronounced that either I was a rake, or she a bold, frail woman. Neither was the case, a woman possessed of more true modesty and integrity than Madame Anacharsis I have never seen; her fault was over self-confidence, and reliance on me; and I, not dreaming of love, cherished to maturity the germ of a passion with which I had already inspired her.

"We had been planning a fete champetre, and one evening I bent my steps to her house, with a portfolio of beautiful costumes; one, handsomer than the others, I had chosen, and wished to induce her to adopt it for the occasion.

"The attendants were absent from the anti-chamber, and I entered the salon de reception unannounced; Madame was there, alone. She sat upon a low ottoman, her profile toward me; she wore a blue satin dress, made so low in the neck that half her fair bosom was exposed; but it was the fashion then, and when fashion countenances an impropriety, it no longer seems one. She seemed absorbed in thought, for she had slid half off the stool, her small hands clasped, and brown eyes upward fixed in thought, or absentness.

"She started, and rose up on hearing my step, and I now saw that her cheeks were wet with tears; surprised at these unwonted tokens of sadness in one usually so gay, I asked the cause.

"She wiped the tears from her eyes, and seating herself by my side, placed her little hands in mine, (where they had often been before,) and looking me straight in the face, suddenly addressed me thus,

"'Rinaldo, my husband has discovered our love: he knows all.'

"'Good heavens, how could he, how should he?' I cried.

"'Indeed he has: this very afternoon he told me that he has watched you and me for sometime past, without our knowing it. He

spoke so gently, so kindly to me of my fault, that his very leniency made me feel a hundred times more miserable than all the reproaches in the world could have done; he said he knew I was young enough to be his child,—that so great a disparity of years must preclude much happiness; but when he reminded me of the unlimited indulgence with which I had been treated, the tenderness with which all my wants, and even my most fantastic whims had been anticipated; *then*, indeed, I felt how unjustly I had served him. He told me too, how much confidence he had ever reposed in me, allowing me to go with whom I liked, and where I liked, without question; and turning my eyes inward, I saw how far I had fallen from my own high standard of female virtue.

"'I said nothing in extenuation of my fault, and in silence acquiesced to guilt; but when my husband took me to his arms again, and told me he would forgive me, even though he became the laughing stock of Paris, on condition I would solemnly swear never to commit the same offence again; and also to send you away, and never more to see your face; then I saw how magnanimous he was in his love, how infatuated in his devotion to me, unworthy me.

"'And now we must part, dear Rinaldo, I mean to say, Monsieur de Serval, we must never meet again, or if we do meet in public, as strangers. It will be a very hard task for me to tear your image from my heart, but I *must;* I ought to love my husband: has he not been so kind to me? Oh, yes, I must forget you, and of course you will forget me: very soon some other will usurp my place. Oh, I wish I were dead and buried.'

"She fell down upon her knees and wept: it seemed to be so difficult for her to surrender me; and it was equally severe for me, for I was tenderly attached to her. The husband's discovery had been startling news: I had not dreamt that Valliere had suspected us; it only remained for us now to say farewell,—a sad word to be spoken at any time, but most particularly in an affair of the heart: it was some minutes before I could calm her sufficiently to speak, and then she only spoke of her fault, her unhappiness, and her jealous dread of my loving some other better than herself.

"'Oh, you will not entirely forget me, will you, Rinaldo? Although hereafter we shall never see each other, you will sometimes think of me; think how unhappy I am; how unwise I have been; but do not despise my weakness; do not think of me with contempt, perhaps, at some future day, when you may love a woman of sterner virtue than myself.'

"'Dear lady, I can never think of you with any other sentiment than admiration. What is there to contemn in one so beautiful and amiable? We have erred unwittingly; if any is to blame, it is myself, not you. May God, who sees all things, forgive me if I have caused you a moment's pain.'

"'It is very hard to say farewell forever,' she kept repeating, as she hung upon my hand; 'but it must be said,'—and after mutual sighs, regrets, tears, and kisses, I sorrowfully tore myself away. She fell fainting on a sofa as I left the saloon, and I brushed tears from my own cheeks as I rushed down the marble terrace steps of her elegant abode.

"My feelings were wild, incoherent, and bitter,—yes, bitter as wormwood, for none but honorable loves yield satisfaction and repose to the soul. I regretted ever having come to Paris, or ever having crossed the bright pathway of so young and innocent a creature; but her husband would still countenance and love her. She was not abandoned or cast away to neglect or shame; that was a great consolation to me; and trusting that her gay and child-like disposition would interest itself in the world, and that new associations would obliterate me from her memory, I became calmed, and returned to my ordinary pursuits.

"Not long after, I received news of my brother's death, at Tunis. He had been shot in a duel. The cause of the encounter was not explained. My two brothers were both dead, and I became heir to my father's estate.

"Francois and myself had never been sufficiently alike in disposition to become tenderly attached. Nevertheless, I regretted his death, as one is in duty to the laws of nature bound to do. Rumor said the charming Madame Anacharsis Valliere had withdrawn from all gay society, and lived entirely in the country. Her health was said to be declining. This was some months after our separation; and possessing the clue to her new love of solitude, I was vain enough to attribute her ennui to sad reminiscences of me.

"I had now been in Paris two years, when I suddenly resolved, one day, to go home, and if my father treated me with such incivility as to render a long residence disagreeable, I could, in that case, return to Paris. I had lost much of the wildness I had brought to the city, and had sobered down. My old friend, the lawyer, had proved himself to be a real friend to me, notwithstanding some lingering traces of youthful vanity. Small foibles are, however, forgiveable when counterbalanced by other good qualities; and I was grateful to him

for his kindness. He advised me to stay and pursue the practice of the law. But yielding to some strange presentiment, which bade me go, I promised him soon to return, and set off.

"I arrived at the castle after twilight had deepened into sombre night. A dense forest of lindens surrounded the old homestead of my childhood, on one side of the building, for more than a mile; and riding through the thicket of trees had, perhaps, pre-disposed me to sadness, for I certainly felt so, when I arrived. No porter was, as usual, at the lodge, and the gardens bore evidence of neglect. I rode on; passed the drawbridge, and dismounting, left the horse to find his way alone to the stables. I went into the inner court of the castle, through the massive gateway, and after traversing that, into the servants' hall. None of the domestics were there. I was amazed at this; for among the numerous attendants my father was want to keep around him, surely some of them would be at their posts. Everything looked so familiar, that even the old wainscotting seemed to welcome me back.

"I went up stairs into the enormous banquetting hall, where, in the olden time, had often been heard sounds of uproarious conviviality, the coarse jest, and loud song, and shone beauty's gentle presence; but it was now silent and deserted; cobwebs wandered unmolested on its walls; and the rich crimson drapery of the window curtains was thick with dust,—the result of years of neglect. No one was here either; and I began to conclude that I had in truth come to the abode of death, when suddenly recollecting the day of the month, I remembered that it was the annual holiday, on which servants had permission to visit the village for the day. This explained *their* absence; but where was Lelia, my father, and step-mother? Had they deserted the house; or were they all dead? I began to feel infected with superstitious gloom. I went up the grand staircase, and sought the different bed chambers of the family. They were tenantless. In Lelia's, several articles of wearing apparel lay scattered about, and a miniature of our mother—an exquisite painting set in gold, and adorned with pearls and emeralds—was lying on her toilet table, entangled with other trinkets, as if thrown down in haste; but the presiding nymph of the boudoir was not there.

"As I stood in the centre of the room staring around me, and wondering what had become of them all;—as I stood thus, a wild shriek of fear, revenge, agony, despair,—it sounded like a compendium of all these emotions—burst startlingly upon my ears. Amazed, I listened intently. I heard no more: all was still, save the flapping of the venetian blinds, as they swung to and fro in the wind, and the

mournful cooing of the doves. A curse seemed to have come and laid its blight and ban upon this unhappy domicile. The living appeared to have deserted it;—perhaps celestials, mayhap demons, had substituted themselves in their place. I determined to ascertain what that strange sound meant, and directed my steps to the quarter whence I thought it proceeded

"I had forgotten to look in my step-mother's drawing room. It was on the same floor with Lelia's room. The scream seemed to have come from there. Thither I went. As I neared the door, I heard a low hissing laugh. The house must be haunted. Surely devils were here. Three steps brought me full before the open door, and, oh, great God! I saw a sight that froze my heart with horror!"

Monsieur dé Serval here started to his feet, as if he still beheld what he described. He stared wildly before him a moment; then recovering himself sat down, and continued:

"Yes, there, in the middle of the room, stood the accursed priest, Father Ignatius; his arms folded, and sinister features expanded into a demoniacal smile. Yes, he who hastened my mother's death, was there; and he now contemplated with the eyes of cold contempt, the death agonies of two other unhappy beings."

"Who were they?" I suddenly demanded, breaking in upor the thread of the narrative.

"My miserable father and his wife. She lay stretched upon the floor, the red life-blood gushing in torrents from a deep wound in her neck; and she shook her clenched fists in impotent revenge at her husband and murderer. Her face, hands, and hair were smeared with blood, and with the energy of death and despair, she muttered curses on his head.

"And he, unhappy being, I could not help feeling some pity for him;—he was my father. In him life seemed quite extinct. He had fallen on a sofa, and lay to all appearance dead: his gray hair fallen back from his death-pale countenance, and his arms hanging listlessly down from his side; marks of blood were also on his person.

"Horror-struck I gazed. This was my welcome home. Then animated by a strange desire to add a third to this goblin group, and kill that vile priest, I strode up to him, and seized him by the arms.

"'Vile, degraded wretch,' I cried, 'and is it you who has done this? Have you added downright murder to the indirect means you used to accomplish my mother's death? Say, say!' I gasped, 'is it *your* deed?'

"The monk turned black with rage; but he controlled himself, and said quietly:—

"'My son, I am as innocent of their deaths as yourself. Only a few minutes ago I arrived here, having just returned from Vienna. Finding no one about the castle, I came in here seeking for your father and madame. Approaching, I heard loud words, and on entering, saw your father stab your step-mother, then turn the weapon against himself, when they both fell as you see them now. The cause of his conduct I am unacquainted with.'

"I did not credit him, and was about to inflict summary vengeance upon him, or compel him to tell me the truth, when the dying woman, raising herself half way on her elbow, after several attempts at speech, feebly articulated:

"'Not he, but he,' pointing to my father; '*he* did it.'

"A frightful convulsion of pain distorted her face. She pressed her hand to her neck, whence the blood issued, and falling back on the floor, after a slight spasm, expired. All this happened in a much shorter space of time than it requires to tell it you. It seemed as if the invisible hand of fate had conducted me there to behold this horrible spectacle. What insanity could have urged my father to such a deed?

"This abandoned woman was dead—stone dead. Her career of deceit and extravagance was ended, and my martyred mother's manes appeased. After looking attentively at the corpse, to see if life was entirely extinct, I turned my attention to my father; but he was already dead. Her features retained in death their expression of lowering darkness, and his the same look of concentrated iron will they had worn in life.

"'Oh, most gracious God!' I ejaculated, sinking on my knees in earnest prayer;—'Oh, vouchsafe to have mercy on their souls; grant them thy grace.'

"'Amen,' said the monk; and he had glided from the apartment before I could arrest his departure. I wished to detain him, at least till I had procured a physician and coroner, and had an inquest on the bodies; but he was gone. Had the devil sent him there also to witness the death of his accomplice? or accident, or what? There was none to answer my questions, but the solitary castle itself;—but could walls have spoken, I presume they would have told me many a strange tale, of strange scenes that had happened since I had left them.

"Assistance must be had, and as none of the servants had yet returned, I mounted my horse and rode to the village, whence I soon returned with a physician and magistrate.

"Their unaccountable deaths puzzled the man of law much; but when I had explained all the circumstances to the sensible, quiet physician, he appeared perfectly satisfied that they had come to their deaths as I surmised,—she from his hand, and he from self-infliction.

"'And you have no clue, no idea of the cause of this terrible event?' he said, after I had told him all.

"'None whatever. I found them as you see them now.'

"'It is most unaccountable,' said the magistrate. 'I cannot imagine of anything so despicable, as a man to commit suicide. This is not only suicide, but murder, too; perfectly atrocious. I never could have thought your father capable of such a deed.'

"'We know not what we shall do till we are tried. Let us pray God to preserve us from temptation,' said the wise physician; and we left the room, locking the door, until some one should come to lay out the bodies.

"The physician and magistrate stayed an hour with me in the banquetting hall, discussing the strange affair. At least *they* discussed it, with professional indifference. For myself, I was stupified, satiated with horror, and said almost nothing. Then some of the domestics returned, and the gray-haired butler, the male nurse and companion of my childhood, listened with stupid surprise to my account of his master's death.

"'Why, sir,' stammered he, as if in doubt of his own identity, 'I left them both well, and together in madame's parlor. How could master so suddenly have taken it into his head to kill her, and then kill himself?'

"'Have there ever been any violent quarrels between your master and mistress, that you have been aware of?' I inquired.

"'Oh! yes, sir, a great many: for the last two years they have scarcely done any thing but fight. I've often heard him tell her he would send her off, and call you back, and make you master here. Miss Lelia fretted much about you; she wished to see you; and madame always abused her. Master seemed to take a great dislike to his wife in the last two years; whenever he spoke of you, she always got into a perfect fever; she really seemed wild; and she would dare him to do something which he said he would do, if she did not do as he told her. Oh! we've had a deal of trouble since you went away.'

"'I see the whole affair plainly now,' said the magistrate; 'they had become involved in one of these quarrels; words ran high; he probably struck her; and then, becoming infuriated as his anger rose, murdered her; and, either from dread of discovery, or disgust of life,

killed himself: thus it must have been; and a most deplorable affair it is, too.'

"'Where is my sister Lelia?' I asked of Juan.

"'She went some days ago to spend a week with some lady friend of hers.'

"'How far is she from here?'

"'Some six miles, sir.'

"'Take one of the fastest horses and go after her: say only her brother has arrived, and wishes to see her—nothing more.'

"'Yes, sir:' the servant departed.

"Some lay sisters were sent for, and came from the neighboring convent to lay out the bodies. Scarcely was their mournful task completed, when Juan returned with Lelia. The beautiful girl burst into tears as she rushed to embrace me; and her grief redoubled when I told her of that day's sad events.'

"'My brother, dear, you little know the many lonely days I've passed since you left us, and how often I have wished for you; that bad woman always treated me with contempt, and father never cared for me; I have passed my days alone, always alone, dreaming and regretting: father changed much, however, in his opinion of you, and would have had you back again, but madame always opposed it; but I little thought, when I left here a week ago, that I should find them both dead on returning.

"I consoled poor Lelia as much as possible, and promised her many future years of happiness; and so far as that happiness depended on myself, I kept my promise. When shown the dead body of her father, she burst into torrents of tears, and fell fainting over the corpse. We removed her to her own room, and the bodies were consigned to mother earth without her again seeing them. With pious care my sister had tended on her mother's grave: and flowers of all hues, all species, grew there in wild luxuriance: and a spirit of holiness seemed breathed around it, as if the pure soul that had animated that mortal clay, still hallowed, still guarded the casket the immortal gem had once inhabited, and preserved it from evil influence.

"They were then all gathered together in death: my legitimate father and mother, the bold usurper of her just rights, and my gentle brother. The governess I buried without a tombstone; she was not worthy of any; the common earth I could not refuse her, but even that I thought too good for her: but I will no longer speak of her, nor trouble you with my personal animosities, but will hasten to the conclusion of my tale.

"I took possession, as sole and natural heir, of the remnant of fortune and estate left me; but finding the castle so deeply mortgaged, that it was more trouble to keep than it was worth, I sold it; I was partly induced to do so from Lelia's nervous dread of remaining in the house where so terrible a murder had been committed, and partly from my incapacity to sustain so expensive an establishment with such small means. I felt much regret at parting with the halls of my ancestors, but the desolate castle would have made a gloomy home for so young a creature as Lelia; she was now at an age when society and gay life would please and captivate; and I determined to take her to Paris with me. The prospect of leaving the solitude and isolation, to which her whole lifetime had been alone devoted, charmed her.

"The home of my childhood passed into stranger-hands. Previous to our departure I caused diligent search to be made in the vicinity for the wicked father Ignatius; but he had disappeared as strangely as he came, and left no trace of his coming or exit. I was convinced, however, from numerous circumstances, traced to their cause, that he was not concerned in or any way accessory to my father's and stepmother's death. Judging from what the domestics told me, and from what I gathered from the neighboring gentry whom my father visited, I surmised that remorse had at last seized upon that man of iron nerve: becoming tired of the governess, or else conceiving a hatred to her, from recollection of the evil deed she had induced him to commit, violent quarrels, crimination and recrimination, was the natural result of alienation of affection; when under the influence of anger we lose our self-consciousness, and know not what we do: in a fit of rage he killed her; and, dreading the consequences, and disgrace, added the last act to this tragedy of sin, and committed suicide. That death scene I shall never forget; no, not if I were to live a thousand years: it haunts me yet with frightful vividness.

"I took Lelia with me to Paris, where she afterwards married, well and happily, the man of her choice, and lives there still.

"I resumed the practice of the law, and became distinguished in that profession. From association with the gayeties of the metropolis, I confess I contracted habits I regret having acquired: my disposition was ardent and excitable, and it carried me too far. I played high, and was seldom fortunate,—almost invariably losing. From mixing with society of a certain class, I acquired the reputation of a *roué* in many instances; that, also, was undeserved; although at that time young and vain, I was more easily caught in love snares than at present. Thus, for some three years longer, I led a gay, wild, yet un-

happy life. Then I began to weary of this futile way of spending time. My health had become impaired by excess, and satiety had taken the place of levity. I wished to find some woman in whose integrity I could confide, and marry her, and become a better man; but among all the gay, the rich, the talented, the beautiful women with whom I was acquainted, none suited me, none equalled my expectations. Sometimes I saw a woman whose *personelle* pleased me; but, on acquaintance, I always discovered something wanting in the mind,—something I could wish added or taken away. I could no where find my Psyche. I gave up my profession, although it yielded me a fine income, and came here to Naples.

"Here I have been living since, unhappy and listless amid pleasures, longing for something I have never yet found, and have thought, till I saw you, I never should find; but at the countess' ball, where first I saw your gentle face, I felt irresistibly attracted toward you: nor has acquaintance disappointed the illusion of fancy; but, on the contrary, strengthened it, and I now love, where first I admired: your upright principles, your beauty, your unblemished reputation and pure heart, have won my love and esteem. Nature evidently designed you for private life, cultivated and elegant society. Let me then be that faithful friend, lover, and husband,—three principles in one person —who shall guard and guide your steps through the quick-sands of life. Consent to redeem me from past errors: teach me to shape my course more worthily in future. Woman's influence, when she exerts it in the right way, is great; do you then become my Mentor, and I will be as docile and obedient as Telemachus."

Monsieur ceased. Meanwhile the bougie was extinguished, and the rays of moonlight, as they tremblingly broke through the clouds, alone illumed the room. I did not like to be sitting there so late at night, and with a gentleman alone.

"It is late: I know I am intruding upon you," said he, and he rose upon his feet; "yet, before I go, say that I may hope—say, dearest Genevra, that you accept me." He pressed my hands in his. I heard him; but did not take the sense of what he said. I was in a dream: one of those delightful waking dreams of fairy land, in which I have so often indulged.

"No answer still, Genevra. Are you angry?"

"Oh, no! Monsieur, not with you."

"With others?"

"I don't know."

"A woman's answer, which means you do: give me the legitimate

right to be your champion? Ah! let me be your husband and defender?"

"I am afraid that, if I marry you, you will some day regret your condescension and your love, which induces you to descend below your rank to marry an actress."

"No, never!" cried he, in an indignant tone, "do you take me for a child—a fool, who knows not his own mind; for none but fools act without pre-consideration."

"You have my consent then, Monsieur: may I prove worthy of you and your expectations."

Joyously he kissed me. "Now, at last, I hope to realize my dreams of domestic happiness and love. Good night then, my pet; to-morrow I shall see you again, before I leave on my journey to the north of Italy, where business demands my presence."

"How long will you be gone?"

"One or two weeks only: I shall hasten to rejoin you. Good night."

Reluctantly he departed. I withdrew to my own room, and, when in bed, endeavored to analyze his memoir. I tried to be impartial, and judge by reason alone, if he were worthy of my affection; but love confused reason, or rather the mischievous god construed everything in his own favor, and demanded blind faith, which, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. Inexperienced, too, in the ways of men, I knew not of that seductive eloquence which dazzles the mind through the heart; besides, I was so young and confiding—it was so charming a thing to be loved—that I did not care to inquire too closely into cause and effect, and crediting all, and happy in the belief, I fell asleep.

* * * * * * *

The next day my lover came and spent two hours with me. He brought me a beautiful diamond ring, the token of our engagement—the gems set in the form of a star,—and a miniature of himself, which he placed around my neck.

"This will serve to recall me to your memory sometimes, while I am gone," he remarked, playfully.

"If a woman loves a man, she needs nothing to recall him to mind, and if she does not, where is the use of a portrait?"

"Ah! you little logician;—little philosopher, you confute me at all points."

"Am I not right, though?"

"Yes; you are always right, at least in my opinion."

"I shall sing in the Opera of Somnambula to-morrow night; will you be there to hear me? but I forget, you will leave this evening, and of course cannot come."

"Yes, I go this afternoon. The time will seem tiresome and tedious until re-united to you. If it were possible, I would excuse myself from this journey: it must absolutely be performed, and I must tear myself away from you and happiness for the present."

"And I shall feel lonely, too, until your return: it is so new, so strange and delightful to be loved, I hardly can realize its truth."

"I trust many bright years to come, we shall experience its happiness, and time will convince you of its reality."

After he was gone, I hastened to Blanche, to confide my secret to her—for a woman must have a confidant of some sort. I found her sitting musingly at an open window, her fair face pillowed on her hand. She listened with kindness and interest to my relation of Monsieur de Serval's sudden and unexpected offer, and appeared gratified at the seeming good fortune which awaited me, when I asked her if she thought him an honorable man and serious in his intentions. She replied:

"It is difficult to tell, my dear Genevra, who is *really* honorable and who is not, for many possess the outward semblance to perfection, without the quality; but that he wishes and intends to marry you, I question not. What object could he have in formally proposing and making these presents, if he did not intend it? The first time I saw him in your society, I discovered that he loved you. It is a fortunate event which enables you, thus early in your professional career, to marry, and leave this disagreeable business."

"Don't you wish to marry and leave it also, dear Blanche?"

"I don't know what I wish, my dear: I wish I was dead sometimes," sighed my friend.

"Come, cheer up, dearest," said I, kissing her; "don't give way to melancholy. You who are so young, so admired and beautiful,—what have you to grieve about? Let me persuade you to be gay: you know we are to sing together to-morrow; is your costume ready?"

"Oh, yes! I always have everything prepared in advance."

"What can I do to amuse you? Oh, Blanche!" I exclaimed, a thought suddenly striking me, "there is an old fortune-telling witch living out on the Posillippo road, let us take a walk out there this evening and hear our destiny; it will be at least amusing, if not instructive. Will you go with me?"

"Yes, certainly, if it will oblige you; but I have no faith in fortune-tellers."

She quickly dressed, and we set out. After ascending the steep hill of the Castle of San Elmo, we took the shady road—bordered on each side by linden trees—which led to the pretty village of Posillippo. I had been told that old Acte inhabited, sybil-like, a cavern in the rock of a steep hill, about half way to the village. We examined all the rocks as we went along; but no traces of fairies' haunts, or witches' caverns did we see. After walking on some distance, we reached the brow of a rising hill, and as I gazed staringly up its steep sides, endeavoring to discover the celebrated abode of the prophetess, I saw a deep cavity in the rock—the opening half overgrown with ivy and wild flowers; a small foot-path wound up to it amid the grass. It had a wild, mysterious appearance, and conjecturing that must be the place, we ascended to it.

"Dear Genevra!" cried Blanche, tremblingly, as I stooped at the small aperture on entering, "pray be careful. Are you sure this is old woman's abode? you may be mistaken;—this may be a wild beast's den."

"This is the place, I know, from description. Don't be afraid: give me your hand; I will assist you in." Grasping my hand from fear, Blanche was dragged by me through the opening. When fairly through, we rose upright upon our feet, and looked at our localities.

We stood in a large chamber, excavated from the solid rock;—no light of day penetrated this haunted dungeon home; but in the far corner, opposite me, an immense chimney and fire-place illumined with a blaze of fire light the singular apartment; and, sitting before the fire, her back toward us, was a strange form crouching on the floor of the cavern: its gray hair was matted, and hung straggling down its back,—and it wore a long black garment, something like the gown of a priest; every instant one of its thin, skeleton-like hands, or rather claws, was projected from its lap, depositing something (I could not tell what) in a large vessel hanging over the flame,—so gathered up and misshapen was the form, I could not distinguish whether it was man, woman, or beast;—the appearance of the place, and this *outré* figure, forcibly reminded me of my childhood, and the old woman I called Granny. Blanche had turned pale as a ghost from fear, and I regretted having come.

The figure did not at first perceive us; and we had stood some minutes unobserved spectators of its singular operations, when, pausing, it turned its head, and I beheld a human face,—but so wild, so wizard-like, it scarcely resembled a woman's countenance. She rose to her feet, and confronted us. She was tall in stature, and the long,

straight robe added to her height. She regarded us with a piercing glance, and then beckoned our approach.

"Be seated," said she, pointing to two stools near her; "you have come to consult me. I knew I should have visiters this evening; the signs said it."

"We had some difficulty in finding you," I observed; "your home is so secluded."

"So much the better,—it keeps fools from troubling me," was the sharp reply. As she spoke, she stepped toward a dark corner of the cave, and after stooping, and apparently feeling about a moment, came back with a bottle, filled with water, in her hand. She resumed her position on the floor before the fire, and then abruptly demanded,—

"Which will learn their fate first?"

"Blanche, do you."

"Oh, no, dear; let her tell you first, and then I will try," answered Blanche, falteringly.

"Well, then, good mother, tell mine."

She turned the bottle of water slowly head downwards; then raising it, apparently contemplating something she saw in the liquid, shook her head, and said,—

"A short lived happiness; then clouds, darkness, and sadness await you; yet out of this sadness shall come a lasting, quiet joy; durable, because it shall be based on proper feelings; and love shall crown all, in future years."

"But, mother, your words are mysterious, incomprehensible to me. Pray tell me in plain language what awaits me. I cannot understand your symbols."

"I have said all I can say; recollect my words,—their meaning will be clear as sunlight, when they shall be verified in times to come. Now you," to Blanche. Again the bottle was reversed, and she pored over its hidden meaning.

"A short but bright career; an ill-fated love; a sudden and violent death, and a solitary grave;—this your fate," and she glared at Blanche with those wild eyes.

I noticed the sudden start of surprise, and glowing blush which overspread the face of my friend at these words. Had she in secret conceived an "ill-fated love?" or was it the unexpectedness of the prophecy caused that start?

"Is my destiny then so sad;—is there nothing brighter in store for me;—are none of my fair visions to be realized?" said she, pensively.

I placed but little reliance on what she said, considering it the mummery and trick of her trade; but Blanche, although she had expressed incredulity on the subject of fortune-telling, for the moment seemed saddened by the prophecy. Wishing to divert her mind from the subject, I began talking to the old woman.

"Have you lived here long, mother?"

"Eighteen summers have been and gone since I first came here."

"You have seen, then, many changes in the city during that time."

"Yes, many have been born, and many have died since eighteen years ago."

"And do you like to live in this old damp cavern? could you not find a better home?"

"No; I desire no better home than a cave among the rocks nature made, and it is not for me or any other mortal to disdain her works. I have been as happy here as I should have been in a fine house."

"Have you many visiters?"

"Not as many as I used to have. I am growing old and dull, and those who have their fortunes told generally go for amusement and ridicule; and now that age and disease have made me severe and grave, they seek others who can entertain them better."

I was about to propose other questions, but observing that Blanche had gone to the entrance, and was beckoning me, I placed a gold piece in the woman's hand, and joined her. Acte followed me to the door of the rock.

"I shall see you again, I feel I shall. At some future day you will find me a true prophet, although now you disbelieve my words. Farewell to both of you."

We descended the hill whence we came; Blanche thoughtful and depressed, and I somewhat influenced by Acte's mysterious predictions. The shadows of evening gathered round us as we entered the fashionable street, Toledo, now thronged with the beauty and fashion of Naples, enjoying their daily rides, drives, and promenades, along the beautiful shores of the bay.

As we walked along the street toward our own home, ourselves observing and observed, an elegant English phæton, driven by a footman, in blue and orange, and occupied by a young man, lovely as an angel, indolently lolling against its cushions, came gliding by. As it passed us, the gentleman stared long at Blanche, and then bowed; her face flushed to crimson, as she returned the salutation. I noticed also he leaned out of the carriage, and looked after her.

"What a splendid looking man," I involuntarily exclaimed; "who is he?"

"The Lord of Glenfells; a Scottish nobleman. I saw him at Munich," answered she, hesitatingly.

"Are you well acquainted with him?"

"Yes, he has visited me."

"Oh, is he not handsome!"

"Yes, very; I always thought him fine looking."

Blanche evidently did not wish to speak further about him; and with that strange intuition with which woman divines woman, I surmised that it was from something of a secret partiality.

Madame Bonni was waiting tea when we reached home.

"My two nightingales, where have you been to? I have been waiting an hour for you; and the French manager has called to see you. He stayed sometime, but finding you did not come, went away, saying he should call in the morning. He has something particular to say to you."

"We have been taking a long walk toward Posillippo and Virgil's tomb, which detained us longer than we had intended," said I, not wishing to tell her our real adventure.

"Ah! have you? Did you go within it?—is it not an interesting sight?"

"No, we did not extend our walk so far as to reach it; but some day, soon, I intend visiting it for that purpose."

My thoughts reverted to Monsieur de Serval, and wondering and wishing he were back again with me, I spent the evening in my room, leaving Blanche to entertain our kind hostess.

When alone, I always thought of my lover, as lovers generally do, I believe. I admired and loved him, but this love was so sudden, so incomprehensible;—men seldom court women on the instant of acquaintance, propose and marry them, especially actresses. Then I recalled what Madame Bonni and rumor had said of his character; his extravagance and bad conduct: but then had he not frankly, and with sincere contrition, admitted his faults, and promised amendment in future? What could be sadder, more touching than that history itself? related so charmingly, in his graceful way. His childhood had been soured by a bold, bad woman, and subsequently thrown upon the sea of life, like a bark without a pilot or rudder to steer it. Temptations, in their most attractive forms, had beset him, and he had done only as other men would have done, not even as bad as that. Much allowance should be made for his youth and beauty, and lonely posi-

tion in life. But my excuses for my lover were endless. I cannot follow them all. When love amounts to infatuation, it is useless to reason; and it was foolish for me to attempt it. I wished he were with me;—I counted the hours and days as they passed.

The other gentlemen who visited me, no longer pleased me. I did not want to see them;—their society only bored me. I usually deserted the parlor, leaving Blanche to do the honors, while I nursed my reveries alone; and she, so gentle and amiable, was willing to do anything to oblige another, and always anticipated and gratified my wishes,—even my strangest whims.

The next morning after our visit to Acte, we were summoned to the parlor to see the manager. We found that worthy individual intently engaged in self-admiration of his own person, reflected in one of the long mirrors. He started on perceiving that *we* had discovered *him* in this interesting employment, which might seem to indicate, perhaps, some slight vanity, (a foolish quality, however, never possessed by the sterner and wiser sex!) Advancing toward us on tip-toe, he smilingly paid the salutations of the day, and then said:

"Mesdemoiselles, the object of my visit is to inform you, that a new opera has been written by a distinguished musician of this city, and I wish to secure your services for its representation. I wish to produce it within a fortnight; new scenery and costumes have been added to the Opera house, and everything which can add to the splendor of effect, I intend shall be done; may I hope to have the co-operation of the two nightingales?" he bowed and chasseed before us.

"What is the name of the new opera, Monsieur?" I inquired.

"It is called Ajesha, or the Maid of Kars, a magnificent production of genius; the plot is romantic and beautiful, the music divine; some of the songs are exquisite. Stay, I will sing you one of the men's, that you may form something of an opinion about it."

He seated himself at the piano and sang a spirited, sweet thing, beginning with, 'My home is on the storm-bound deep.' We listened intently, and admired it.

"That is one of the gems of the opera, and there are many others equally beautiful; some of the women's songs are exquisite, and you, fair ladies, I know will do them justice. I wish to bring it out within two weeks. In the course of that time the royal family return to the city, and will grace the theatre with their presence; may I consider your services engaged, Mesdemoiselles?"

"Blanche is free to decide for herself, Monsieur," I replied; "but for me, my guardian must decide."

"Ah, yes, but Belmont of course will be perfectly willing. I shall see him this morning and ask him, but you Mademoiselle Ricorsi, you are independent and can choose for yourself,—will you be the Ajesha?"

"I have never yet played in Naples; you know my terms, monsieur; are you willing to pay me what I have been in the habit of receiving at Munich?"

"Of course, Mademoiselle, your price is my price."

"Then I shall be happy to sing, monsieur."

"All is agreed then, and I shall be happy to see you at rehearsal to morrow, ladies, when we will run through the opera, and cast your parts," and the polite Frenchman bowed himself out of our presence.

I omit the rehearsals, the confusion of preparation, and getting ready the costumes for the occasion, and pass to the night when this beautiful opera was produced for the first time on the Neapolitan boards.

It was a tragedy; the plot is a singular one: Ajesha, the Maid of Kars, is a Circassian, as her name denotes; she is sold into slavery from her native land, and carried to the town of Kars, where she becomes the property of a Turkish Emir; he loves her intensely, and of course is most intensely jealous. She, a beautiful, spiritual creature, does not love this illiterate Turk, distinguished for nothing, but his immense wealth and brutality.

A noble and handsome Englishman is taken prisoner by this Turkish commander, the English and Turks then being at war; he is imprisoned in a house opposite the harem of Ajesha; news of his youth and beauty is brought to the lady; he becomes ill from the severity of his treatment, and Ajesha, in the disguise of a page, visits, and nurses him. The consequence is, they conceive a mutual and desperate love for each other.

At first their meetings are undetected by the jealous Mussulman, but Ajesha dreading future discovery, appoints the cemetery, the city of the silent, as their rendezvous. A treacherous slave betrays her confidence to the Emir; he surprises them one evening, and stabs her in the arms of her lover; then attempting to punish the Englishman, he himself is killed by the enraged lover, and dies by the side of his fair slave

This is the outline, as well as I remember it, of one of the most exquisite things I ever saw performed. The character of Nina I was cast for, voluntarily resigning the principal character in favor of my friend; and oh, how beautiful, beyond the power of description, did she look the night she played it.

She first makes her appearance in the Circassian costume, when she is sold from the home of infancy, and carried to a strange land; and the dress Blanche wore, was of white silk, ornamented with gold lama lace; a turban of tissue, spangled with gold stars, surmounted her flaxen curls waving on her shoulders; the graceful trousers gathered into a gold bandelette at the ancle, exposed fully to view her tiny feet, encased in their little Circassian slippers. The affectionate, sad farewell to her parents and young acquaintances, and the song she sings, 'My native land, farewell,' shook the house with applause. Every one had heard of, but none had yet seen the Munich nightingale; curiosity had been on the alert for some time, to witness our combined appearance, and glancing out from the side scenes I observed the royal box occupied, and the queen leaning forward with an air of rapt attention.

I personated the friend and companion of Ajesha. Nina accompanies her into captivity, but is finally redeemed by her friends, and returns home. The music of the farewell scene between Ajesha and Nina, was very sweet; when they bid each other adieu, and sing, 'We have been friends together in sunlight and in tears;' and we mutually felt indeed we had been friends together. The queen enthusiastically applauded, clapping her hands like a girl; and bouquets were promiscuously showered upon us from all parts of the house: two wreaths were cast at our feet by the king and queen. The coincidence struck me, it was on a similar occasion, the night of my debut in that theatre, that the wreath had been thrown me; not by royalty, but by one whose gemmed, singular face had strangely haunted me since, and as we both uplifted our eyes to the royal box, who should I see gazing on me behind their majesties, but the same face, the same large liquid eyes that had magnetised mine two months before. My astonishment was so great, I could scarcely recollect myself enough to step backward as the heavy drop curtain fell.

Who could that man be accompanying the royal family? and apparently on familiar terms with them. I could not doubt it was the very same one, the donor of the diamonded wreath, those beautiful flowers I had preserved for so many days with so much care, who seemed to regard me with an air of so much interest.

I had no time for reflection, Monsieur Belmont hurried us to our dressing-rooms, to dress for the palace scene, when Ajesha and Nina are first presented to the Emir.

I could not help mentally contrasting the absurd difference between the acting on the stage, and the motley confusion behind the

scenes; the heaps of stage furniture, costume, old scenery, the scene shifters running hither and thither, black mutes, soldiers, noblemen, the women of the harem, in the most charming stage of negligee, nearly approaching to that of genuine nature, and above all other tones, I heard those of the worthy manager, who was directing the men how to arrange the grand salon de reception, into which we were to be carried in close litters.

"Here," shouted he, "make haste; what are you all about? where's the dias for the salon? place it here, spread out the carpet; now, is that done? arrange yourselves in a row behind the throne, to the guards; light the lamps; get the instruments of music."

I entered the little room, where I dressed amid his reiterated injunctions and commands to the assembled court.

What an empty show, thought I, as I hastily attired myself in the rose colored satin petticoat, and black velvet boddice, and placed a waving plume of white feathers in my hair.

The Count Godolpho, an old *roué* and *habitué* of the "scenes" for years back, stopped me with a fine compliment, as I was getting into the veiled litter by the side of Blanche.

"What! Mademoiselle Sfonza, is it you? fair as a star-lit nymph of air!" This was a poetical fancy of his own: I never met with the like expression in print. "Our pet child of song, stay a moment, let me look at you."

"I cannot now, Marquis, indeed, see they wait our entry."

"Where then can I see you, wilful fay? one never gets a sight of you except at the play: then only for an instant, and you are gone; where do you live?"

"On earth now, in heaven I hope some day," I smartly answered, —making a faint attempt at wit, to rid myself of this worn out old coxcomb, as I had no wish or intention to receive his visits; and the black mutes raising the litter, we were borne past him on the stage.

Although conscious it was a mere show, still in the last act, the death scene of Ajesha and her lover, the touching pathos of Blanche's acting, her dreamy, etherial tones, melted me to tears; and I almost cheated myself into the delusion that it was reality. Her death song, 'Beloved, I die,' seemed indeed like the last breathings of a dying spirit, and oh, merciful heaven, was it not prophetic of her future fate?

When the curtain fell on the last act, we were loudly called for, and our teacher, proudly elated at this great triumph, led us before the curtain, where we made our curtesies, kissed hands to the audience and passed off.

The morning papers were filled with praises of our performance, and the plot, music, and libretto of the new opera. I laughed myself to sleep that night when I thought of the discomfiture of the count, and his absurd manner; then again, unconsciously and mysteriously, my thoughts reverted to the gentleman I had seen in the royal box—you will think, perhaps, I did not love my affianced lover, since my attention and thoughts could be so easily distracted to another, but in truth I did; I loved him with my whole soul; every wish, every thought was his; this interest in a stranger, a casual spectator of my performance, was not love, nor curiosity; it was a prophetic, a magnetic attraction, a feeling that seemed to tell that in future—but no matter, I will no longer digress; let me strictly adhere to the tenor of my tale.

Blanche had long before fully compensated monsieur for his care of her childhood, and presented him beside with a handsome sum of money. Her industry had accumulated quite a small fortune, within the four years she had been performing for herself; the receipts of our joint acting each night were enormous, and Monsieur Belmont had no reason to regret his patronage of the Viennese beggar girl.

He often said, himself, that we three poor girls had gained him more money and celebrity than any pupils he ever had. As I said in the beginning of my memoir, there is always a *motive* in these apparently beneficent actions. His motive was to feed, clothe, and educate us brilliantly for the stage; for this purpose it was much better to select girls from the lowest walks of life, friendless, uncared-for ones, unprotected and unprovided for, over whom he rould have absolute control. True, he had saved us from starvation, but then he had realized a fortune from our exertions, and I was anxious to absolve myself from my debt of gratitude and obligation, and become mistress of my own actions, which every sensible rational being desires and ought to be.

My teacher knew nothing of my secret engagement. I had not told him, and wondered, when told, what he would say and think of it. Of course he would be astonished at its suddenness, and, in a worldly point of view, at the condescension of Monsieur de Serval. I did not even know that he would give his consent, as he had a right to command my services. I trusted, however, to his uniform kindness to me, to arrange that matter. I felt sure he would not force me to do any thing I did not wish to do; that he would allow me to discontinue my theatrical career if I felt so inclined.

We were visited daily by many of the fashionable men of Naples;

we were escorted to and from the theatre by numerous beaux, and the gay cavaliers vied with each other in their attentions; yet the compliments, the civilities paid to actresses, are of a different tone to those rendered to ladies of private life. There is a tone to all expression, a gradation to every human feeling; there is an imperceptible something in expression which we can feel but cannot describe; and it was this something that I felt, but could not describe, when I regarded the opposite of attentions to a lady of rank, and compliments to an actress.

I endeavored to console myself for all regrets in philosophy, but sometimes *feeling* triumphed over even that, stoical as I thought myself. Sometimes attributing every thing to fate, sometimes believing in chance, I surrendered myself to the current of life's troublous stream, and blindly glided on.

Among other visiters to the house, there came the beautiful Lord of Glenfells. I say beautiful, because handsome, manly, fine-looking, are not terms to express his ideal, his exquisite, shadowy, captivating loveliness. He often visited Blanche. I never obtruded on their interviews; and, save the ordinary civilities of etiquette, never had any acquaintance with him; yet, though I saw him frequently, the impression of his personal attractions ever seemed new to me. I know not if he were intelligent or otherwise. I once or twice spoke of him to her, but the embarrassment and rosy blush told of interested feeling, and perceiving she did not wish to converse about him, I ever afterwards waived the subject.

Busy gossiping tongues, however, with which the world is filled, who make it their business to attend to every body's but their own, reported him as a man of immense wealth, travelling for amusement, or pleasure, which with the rich, and great, and fashionable, means the same thing. This was all I gathered concerning him; yet from what I saw of him, I considered him a man of dangerous attractions; artful, without appearing to be so, possessing a mournful tenderness, an abandon of manner, peculiarly attractive to a woman like Blanche. Though younger, I was superior in perception of the realities of life. I was not so dreamy, perhaps not so pure as she, my embodied concentration of the great, the beautiful, the good. God bless her! Let me not dilate upon that purity, that goodness. I feel my praise is inadequate to her merits; my commendations cannot add to the halo of immortality that surrounds her in the Elysian shades.

CHAPTER VIII.

The three weeks' absence of Monsieur de Serval, was occupied in fulfilling our engagement in Ajesha, which was performed twenty nights, and obtained great popularity for itself and glorious fame for us. Upon the return of my lover, my comet-like career was to terminate into marriage and retirement into private life. Blanche still adhered to her resolution of remaining unmarried, though many good offers had been made her; and of the opinions of Inez in that particular, we had been duly informed by a letter from herself, describing her happiness, and pleasant home, and husband's love.

The prophecy of old Acte lingered in my mind and constantly haunted me, and Blanche also seemed painfully impressed by her words. I observed for some days before M. de Serval's return, that she would sit for hours—often all day—in absent thought, noticing no one, answering no one, if spoken to. Wondering at this neglect of my kindness in her, who had always from childhood manifested so much attachment to me, I felt a reproach to this coolness rise to my lips; but when I glanced at that calm, sweet face, and saw the pre-occupation of sad thought, all anger vanished, and quietly coinciding with her wish, I left her to her meditations.

The night before the day on which my lover returned, I sought my pillow early; but sleep fled my eager embrace. Restlessly I tossed: I could not rest. Madame Bonni had a library of select works fitted up in a little room on the ground floor; I remembered this, and wanting to amuse me till repose should come, I arose, slipped on an opera-cloak of blue satin, which happened to be lying near the bed, and thrusting my feet in slippers, descended the stairs: all the household were retired. I got my book from the library, and was about returning, when passing the door which led into the garden, at that late hour I was surprised to see it open. The resplendent moonlight streamed brightly through, disclosing my favorite seat beneath the blooming Acacia and those beds of roses so odorous, and that pretty garden looked so inviting, that I stepped out in the moonlight and looked around. All nature was hushed to repose,—that delightful calm which, unlike death, tells of prostrated strength presently to be revived. As I stood upon the porch, gazing vacantly around, voices struck my ear. Who could be there at that late hour? I thought of robbers, and trembled with

fear. A moment's listening re-assured me: it was a woman's sweet tones I heard, and then those of a man in reply.

Far down the gravel-walk, at the extreme end of the garden—by the margin of a little fountain which had once played there, but whose source was now neglected and obstructed by weeds and stones—I thought I perceived two forms. Determined to ascertain who and what they were, I stole noiselessly down the walk, to the shade of my favorite tree, which now cast its deep shadow far down the way, and concealing myself behind the broad trunk, peeped from around it, and beheld, to my astonishment, Lord Glenfells and Blanche!

I saw her leaning on his full chest, her arms encircling his neck, her little mouth united to his, her soft eyes fixed on his, and he was gazing into hers with the same fondness—only more animal passion added to it. Tears fell like pearly dew from her eyes, and I saw him pause, as he spoke, and wipe them away with his small hand. I listened to hear their voices speak again, unable to explain to myself this singular scene.

"Is not love the same? Can an empty ceremony—said over two lovers—render more binding the greatest, best, and noblest sentiment of our nature. Say, Blanche!—my beautiful one, my ocean pearl!—could the words of the matrimonial service make me more constant,—make me love you more than I now do? You, my heart's worship, my idol! shall I not give you my whole soul; and what more can I do? If an unhallowed, a conventional form into which I was persuaded—forced; if that wretched link of earth binds me, in earthly form, to another,—what matters it? Consider, love, it is the same, so long as we are constant to our attachment: that constitutes the perfidy. Oh! listen not to the world's prudence—to the cold calculations of a prudish moral. Let feeling usurp its place, and that I know will triumph—will plead my cause. Come with me this night—now; beneath the light of yonder bright silver. We will seek some other land, or a distant part of this country, where your fault—if that can be called fault which consumates my bliss—will be unknown, unheard of; and we will live in blest harmony and love. Come, dearest; come?"

"No, no!" and her voice was choked by tears. "My love is all wrong: it is unhallowed. You are a married man. If I fly with you, disgrace follows me: you have a wife in England: you must forget me, and I, you. Even were you free, would you marry me? Consider your rank, and *I* an actress."

"Blanche, you mean not what you say, when you tell me to forget you. Do you really wish me to return to England to my dull wife—

ten years my senior—and the stupidity of home—a home like that? Do you really wish it? If so,—farewell."

He made a movement to turn away; but she clung still closer to his bosom, and buried her head there.

"Cruel! oh, cruel! I do not want you to go."

"Consent, then, to go with me. Come now, this moment? I will get a carriage, and morning light shall find us far away. Decide, Blanche, between my loss and my happiness. No answer? Blanche, are you dreaming, love?"

"No; I was thinking of Genevra, my faithful friend. What will she think of my conduct! How mysterious it will seem to her: how ungrateful! but I love her,—oh, so dearly! She is the only woman who ever loved me, and I return her feelings with usury, too. Let me at least run up to her room, and, as she sleeps, kiss her farewell. I feel, for the last time, and here,—while the moon shines so bright above—while I consent to forfeit, for your sake, my good name, inviolate till this moment,—here let me gaze upon those starry spheres, and call down upon her young head their resplendent blessings. Oh, Heavenly Spirit! preserve her as she now is—beautiful and pure as the lily of the valley. Preserve her from that error of the heart which I now commit, which leads me to sin—knowing that sin. Grant that, in some future state, our souls may meet—may hold communion with each other, and be conscious of affinity. Holy influences of heaven! spirit of night and air! grant my prayer."

I saw her sink upon her knees, clasp her hands on her white neck, and fix her eyes on the starry firmament. Thus she remained a moment, in a breathless ecstacy of thought, when Lord Glenfells gently raised her, and once more folded her to his bosom.

"Why this tumult of passion, dearest? What agitates you so?"

"Get a carriage: bring it round to the garden-gate: I shall soon be ready for you. Meanwhile, let me go and kiss her good by?"

I saw her break away from his fond arms; and, quick as thought, I retreated to my chamber, unobserved as I had come. I would not for worlds that she should have known that I had overheard her. I got into bed again, and closed my eyes. She passed my door, and ascended to her own room. Her hasty steps sounded overhead for some time,—hurriedly packing up, I suppose,—then she again descended, and paused at my door.

The lock turned, and her sylph-like form glided to my bed side. She stooped over me—imagining I slept—and smoothed my hair

beneath my cap with her tiny hand; then she kissed my forehead, and murmured,—

"Genevra! dear Genevra! dear friend! when you awake in the morning you will seek me, but find me not: perhaps you may miss me for a little while,—may sometimes think of me with love and kindness: I hope so. I go to a new life—the life of love! I go to accomplish my destiny."

Once again she kissed me, then glided from the room. I heard her tell Lord Glenfells to bring the carriage to the garden-gate. My room looked on the street. I rose again from bed, and directed my steps to a little back room, near my own, which overlooked this gate. I wanted to see her go, though she knew not I was a witness of that departure. Her behaviour was an enigma I could not solve, and the reasons for which ever remained a mystery. If she was determined to become the associate of this man, why not go to him in broad daylight: what prevented her? She was her own mistress: no one did, or had the right to control her. She had long ago emancipated herself from her teacher's guardianship; what, then, was the reason of this secret flight? I knew not then: I know not now.

I had stood watching at the window of the room for some time, when I saw Lord Glenfells and Blanche emerge from the shadow of the porch, and pass through the gate; he put her in the landau, saw the baggage placed behind; seated himself by her, and, like lightning, they vanished from my sight.

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The amazement of our hostess can better be imagined than described, when, on going to her room next day, she found it unoccupied—the stage and personal wardrobe of its fair proprietress gone also: and whither had she taken her flight? how strange the gifted child of song should yield to a momentary infatuation; and, listening to impulse, forgetting reason, abandon herself to such a life: what demon possessed her?

I had expected a violent storm on the part of M. Belmont; but, to my astonishment, he received my recital of the night's adventure with perfect indifference: and remarked, with imperturbable phlegm, that "it was her own affair; she ought to know best what she was about." I had expected some surprise, sorrow, or at least an emotion of some sort; but I forgot that my teacher had been hardened in the ways of the world; and births, deaths, marriages, seductions, and every other evil thing, was a matter of course to him. He always maintained that every sensible person should be the best judge of their own conduct:

like a true Frenchman, he did as he pleased, and allowed every one else to do the same, unmolested, undisturbed by criticism or advice.

After breakfast, Madame Bonni and I sat together speculating and mystifying about Blanche's strange behaviour: the problem, however, could not be solved by us. It was past elucidation, and the more we talked, the farther we got from the point—the motive of action. While we were discussing, I was called away; my lover had returned.

"I found him standing on his feet, hat in hand, facing the door, where I entered—his face calm and happy in expression—and it warmed and brightened when I came towards him; catching my hands in his, he pressed them fervently, and, kissing me, asked,

"Have you missed me, darling?"

"Oh! very much, dear Rinaldo."

"And I have been dreaming of you during my whole journey; I scarcely had sense enough left from reverie to attend to my business, and I have hurried back, leaving it half incomplete, to be arranged by lawyers.'

"But where is it you have been to, dearest?"

"Genoa and the frontier of Austria: an estate left me I was in danger of losing, through the perfidy of relations; but, thank heaven! their malice is defeated, and I am safe: now, love, come sit here by me on this sofa, and tell me all you have been doing. I left the night Somnambula was to be performed: tell me about it; did it succeed?"

I described the opera, and singing: its success, and subsequently the disappearance of Blanche with Lord Glenfells, the night before.

"Gone with Lord Glenfells! what an unwise action: but who is he?"

"A gay young Englishman, travelling on the continent for amusement; dear Blanche, who would have dreamed, after all the temptations she has evaded, who would have thought she would have acted thus?"

"No one in truth; it is very strange: your friend appeared so gentle, so indifferent to men's society, and fond of solitude; of all women, I should have thought her the very last one to commit so rash an action."

"Blanche is one of those strange, impulsive beings, who, if you can only thoroughly warm and interest, will go all lengths to love and please you. Lord Glenfells has acquired a great influence over her, and she has consented to forego respectability, society, everything for him. Oh, how I wish she had not done so; how I regret her loss."

"She may repent this imprudence some day, and return to pro-

priety; and you, do not grieve about her; summon your stoical philosophy, and practice your favorite aphorism. Never regret that which is past."

"Yes, I know I ought to practice my precepts: philosophy triumphs over past and future ills, but present troubles overmaster philosophy."

"True, love: a wise remark."

"We were engaged to sing five nights yet, to complete our engagement; now she is flown, I shall have to finish alone," I observed, absently; for, notwithstanding my joy at seeing my lover again, my thoughts reverted to the absent Blanche.

Monsieur de Serval drew me gently toward him, as he sat upon the sofa.

"Come hither dearest, come sit close by me, your presumptive and future lawful protector; do not look so sad; cheer up, and let us talk of happiness and love, and delightful scenes, and conversations, all in store for us in times to come."

But I could not feel my usual cheerfulness, even for *his* sake, and after a slight conversation he went away, and I retired to my own room and my solitude; and then I wept for Blanche's loss, and Blanche's shame.

Nothing is sooner dried than a tear; and, as de Serval had said, my regrets could not restore her, could not undo her behaviour; and the deprivation of her sweet society, made me fonder still (if that could be) of that of Monsieur de Serval; my whole heart now exclusively centered in him. I performed my last engagement on the Neapolitan boards, and bade adieu to the distinguished patronage of royalty, and the humble, yet heartfelt admiration of the people. The journals doled forth newspaper sentiment and lamentations at the dramatic loss; and private circles wondered at my good fortune. For myself I did not think whether it was good fortune or not. I only knew, I only thought I loved him, and was willing to go any where, do anything, make any sacrifice for him. I will not describe the few weeks of courtship that intervened before my marriage; such scenes can only be felt, be experienced, they cannot be told; they are sad, yet sweet episodes in my memory, and though painful to recur to, yet mentally I treasure them, for that was my *first* love.

Signor, I married him; my wedding was simple, and celebrated with but little display; his noble friend, the Countess Bramanti honored it with her distinguished presence; and my guardian, teacher, and benefactor, Monsieur Belmont, gave me away. I was united to him in the pretty church of Sacre Cœur, where, some weeks before I had

attended mass with Madame Bonni; it was filled with spectators, every one wishing to see the new singer married; and my kind hostess kissed me at the conclusion of the ceremony, and wished me happiness, with tears in her eyes, and smiles on her lips.

"May many blissful days and years be thine, fair girl," said the countess in her deep tones, as she swept her majestic form toward me, and clasped me in her arms; "may you love each other, and in that love be happy."

Monsieur Belmont conducted me to the carriage, which was to bear me away to my future home, in a valley, amid the cloud-capt Appenines. Immediately on arrival there, I promised to write to him, and regularly maintain a correspondence. My husband, (how strange the word sounded to my ears,) joined me, and I was whirled away from the scene of my short-lived, yet brilliant triumphs.

Our journey to his mountain home occupied two days; and during the time my husband exhibited a frenzy of emotion, which terrified more than it pleased me. But the ways and loves of men were then Isiac mysteries to me, and you know their translation of the word love, is rendered differently to ours.

On the evening of the second day of our travel, he told me we were approaching the "Chateau of the Ravine," for that was the traditionary name of the castle. The scenery was sublime, and lost in contemplation and thought, reposing my head on his shoulder, I silently admired it.

Stupendous rocks, rising perpendicularly in the air, to an immense height, faced the smooth road on either side for some distance; as these declined away, a broad vista of the dark blue mountains far in distance, and a beautiful level plain, such as I had seen when first I came to Naples, met my gaze. Like a panorama these swiftly disappeared, and we entered on a broken chain of the Appenines themselves; the carriage slowly wound round and round the upward ascent of the rocky pass, barely wide enough to allow the vehicle room to roll along; then we descended as rapidly as we had come up, and thus continued on for some miles, when the ridge of mountains suddenly terminated, and I looked down from the great height on which we stood, and beheld at my feet the ravine, and in the midst of it, presenting an imposing appearance of grandeur and decay, the chateau. It had been built, my husband said, in the ancient times of feudal splendor, but its successive possessors, either for want of means or inclination, had suffered it to moulder away, as time, year after year, diminished its magnificence. He said he intended refitting it, and

renovating the antique style, and I was pleased to hear the promise that so fine a structure should be rescued from decay.

A few minutes brought us to the gates, which were thrown wide open to receive us, and the carriage rumbled into the great court-yard. M. de Serval alighted, lifted me out, and leaning on his arm, I ascended a marble staircase, and entered a pretty salon, tastefully furnished, where I sat down, quite wearied by fatigue. He left the room for a moment, to order lights and supper to be prepared, for twilight was stealing over us, and leaning back on the couch, I languidly closed my eyes, and was almost dropt asleep, when a heavy footstep startled me; looking up, I saw standing before me, and fixedly looking at me, an old woman; there was nothing strange in the simple fact of her being old, for old women are plentiful as stars; but this one was peculiarly singular in appearance; she wore a scarlet woollen petticoat, black stockings, and a little cap of green; her long, thick, and coarse black hair, fell below her waist in tangled braids; her eyes were piercing in expression, and they seemed to sparkle and glance fire as she fixedly stared at me. She appeared to be beating time to her own thoughts, for she repeatedly struck her breast with her right hand. Perceiving that I saw her, she curtesied, and in a lofty tone said,

"Welcome to your home, fair mistress; welcome to the 'Chateau of the Ravine.'

"Do you belong to the household of Monsieur de Serval?" I asked, strangely impressed by her manner and appearance.

"Yes, madame: I came here a long time ago, in the service of the first lady."

"The first lady! who was she?"

"You know, madame, of course, the Lady Isodore, Monsieur's—"

Abruptly she paused; and, turning, I saw my husband's stern gaze fastened on her: she cowered beneath that look; and well she might, for even I could not have met it unabashed.

"Pasiphae, you can go; your young mistress is tired; she needs repose after her long travel."

Silently she retreated.

"Who is that old woman, dearest? her strange ways surprised me."

"An old domestic I have retained in my service, though almost useless; come Genevra, your chamber is prepared, and supper arranged in the banqueting hall."

Thither we went: the apartment was magnificent, and one of the tables set with dainties that might have delighted an epicure; the lamps, shrined in vases of alabaster, shed a sweet, soft light; the hush

of stillness and repose reigned within and without; and, more than all, my husband's accents of tenderness, and the tumult of love that had usurped the place of gentler emotions in my breast, have impressed that scene in indelible traits on my memory.

After supper we returned to the salon, and entertained ourselves, till the clock struck the hour for retiring, with a conversation in which *words* had all to do, not thoughts: *they* were differently employed.

Then, at ten o'clock, we retired to our bedchamber; the same old woman stood at the door of the room as I entered: an ominous smile sat on her lips; she opened her mouth, as if to speak; but, perceiving my husband close behind me, she went away without expressing the thoughts which seemed to tremble on the point of utterance.

Then, when the door closed behind us, suffocated with joy, we fell into each other's arms—let me draw a veil over that night, and pass to other scenes.

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I wish I could make you realize the ecstatic rhapsody in those first days of wedded love: such emotions as I experienced one can only experience once in a lifetime: for the novelty wears away; they also disappear. I wish I could make you feel as I felt, as we roved together, like children, hand in hand, through those flowery glades, and through the blooming gardens of this old castle—sometimes reading, sometimes talking, always loving, and picturing a continued increase of happiness, and everlasting bliss.

Alas! poor frail human nature! Poor frail, inconstant mortals! What a strange mockery does it not seem to our own hearts to look back after years have changed these delusions of fancy, and stripped them of their false lustre; what a mockery does it not seem to think over what we once thought—and see the folly of dreaming of affections unaltered, and hearts that never could grow cold?

Old Pasiphae was my attendant. I preferred her to another, a younger girl, who had come to the castle to engage in my service. She was a very odd woman, and strongly infected with the popular superstitions of that section of the country. She was avoided by the other domestics as a half lunatic: for low, ignorant, or vulgar minds, always attribute eccentricity of mind or manner to mental perturbation; and, surely, the wise have every inducement to become insane, if they pay attention or depend for happiness on the stupid fools of which the greater portion of mankind are composed.

The chateau was built with two wings each side of the main building: the right wing was always closed, bolted and barred. I had

been married two months, when curiosity induced me, one day, to ask Monsieur de Serval the reason why that part of the mansion was unopened, unoccupied, and neglected. He answered carelessly, that the castle was so large, he had not thought it necessary to refit that side of it;—it was more decayed than the rest. This reply satisfied me for the moment, but woman's curiosity was on the alert, and I wished, I scarce know why, to see the interior of that gloomy side of the chateau.

Six months had glided swiftly on since my marriage. Oh, days of hope! oh, hours of happiness! with what mournful pleasure do I retrace your flight! and with what lingering sadness detail the strange contrast which time developed all too quickly to my wondering eyes!

I had heard several times from my worthy teacher. No tidings had reached him of Blanche. He had heard nothing; knew not if she were dead or alive. This distressed me, even amid my own joy. Madame Bonni was well, and often sent her love; and the theatrical world, they said, still mourned my irreparable loss;—the journals still dwelt upon my merits.

It was at this moment of time that Rinaldo left me for three days, for a hunting party, to come off some fifty miles from the castle. He bade me farewell with great tenderness, and departed. This was a favorable opportunity, I thought, for the execution of my long-cherished project of gaining admission to the closed and, I imagined, haunted rooms. The key my husband always kept locked up in a small casket, and I knew where the key of that was to be found.

Having unlocked the casket and obtained the key, I took a lamp from my dressing table, and directed my steps to that quarter of the house. The quivering flame was often nearly extinguished by gusts of wind, and the shaking of the great oriel windows reminded me of the tread of ghosts. My feet often faltered from fear; but I continued on, and reached the great door in the centre of the long gallery, which gave admission to the interdicted apartments.

When I inserted the key in the lock, and unlocked the door which gave entrance to these deserted rooms, my heart quite failed me, and I regretted my curiosity. What was there to see about old unfurnished, desolate apartments? How foolish of me to pry into nothing! Yet an impulse I could not overcome bade me go onward; and accordingly I pushed open the door, which opened harshly. I went in; the first room was a large anti-chamber, like that on the other side of the house, naked and lonely. Crossing this, I opened another door, which

led, as I supposed, into a similar apartment, when, to my utter amazement, I beheld what struck me dumb with astonishment.

The salon in which I stood was well furnished. A Grecian couch occupied one corner; books, and toys, and instruments of music were scattered round, and reclining on this couch lay a woman of handsome form, but wild, haggard features, and insane expression; and on a low stool at her feet sat Pasiphae, my attendant.

Hearing the door open, she glanced around, and seeing me, shrieked, and covered her face with her hands:

"Gracious heavens! madame, how came you here? what brought you to these fated rooms?"

"What does this mean? speak, I command you! Who is this woman?—what are you doing here?"

"Ah, madame, why did you come here? Alas! alas! how unhappy; how unfortunate," was the only reply she made, as she rocked herself to and fro.

"Tell me! tell me quickly," I cried, seized with a horrible suspicion of the truth. At this the strange woman raised herself to a sitting posture, and regarding me with a countenance of melancholy wildness, said, clasping her hands together as she spoke:

"Oh, ask him, won't you, to take me out of this;—I will be good, indeed I will: I never will come near him, if he don't want to see me, if he will only take me away. Oh, do ask him: pray do?"

I went toward her mechanically, so stunned and stupid was I with astonishment. I sat down beside, and more closely observed the poor lunatic. I could plainly see fine traits in that blurred face; traces of mind, now scarred and erased, like a blotted crimpled page. Love, jealousy, humanity, and disgust, all told me that in this unhappy one I saw my husband's victim. What could he mean by shutting her up there? Old Pasiphae still sat with her head bowed between her hands, and she momently exclaimed,—"What will master say? oh, how he will curse me!"

"No, no, Pasiphae; you shall not be blamed. Monsieur de Serval shall never know of my visit here. Get up, and tell me what this strange scene means."

The maniac stared at me with her great black eyes, and then continued on in her sad tones. "No, no ball to-night; I cannot dance: he is coming for you to-morrow,—I cannot dance when I expect him; take away the dress; send away the carriage; I am going to sleep to dream of him," and languidly closing her eyes, she sunk back on the couch, and lay perfectly still. Thinking the poor creature had

fainted, I uttered an expression of fear, when Pasiphae, motioning me to silence, bent over her watchfully. Presently the sound of her regular breathing assured the old domestic that she slept. Smoothing back from her forehead the tangled masses of her hair, and covering the thin form with a large shawl, Pasiphae composed her delicate hands upon her breast, and then rising, took my hand in hers, and said mournfully:

"Come, dear lady, this can be no pleasant sight for you;—if you will return to your own room, I will tell you all. I have been on the point of doing so several times, but fear of master's anger prevented me; and I am old and broken down, and were he to discharge me, might suffer and die from want. Come, lady, ere she awakes. Poor thing; she will soon be dead and far away. She has been very troublesome of late,—I could scarcely manage her; but now she sleeps quietly—the first time in many days."

I silently contemplated the fitful repose of the madwoman for a moment before going, and in that instant I saw the whole fabric of delusive happiness I had erected on unstable air, shattered to the earth. I gazed on the neglected, cast-off victim of my lord's caprice, in whose emaciated form and desert mind I saw the records of long mental and bodily suffering.

Pasiphae interrupted my reverie by twitching my robe; and, after she had arranged the light on the antique mantel-piece, and adjusted her window drapery, taking my lamp in her hand, we left the salon, locking the door upon her insane ward.

The outer door of the anti-chamber she also locked; and, satisfied that if awaking she could not follow us, I returned to my chamber, and overwhelmed with sickness of the soul, threw myself despairingly into a chair, and burying my face in my hands wept bitterly. I felt disappointed—heartbroken;—disappointed that the man in whom I had centred all my hopes, should so utterly have ruined them;—heart-broken at the melancholy sight I had seen. Sobbing like a child I sat and wept, forgetful of my own identity, or Pasiphae's presence. At length my grief in a slight degree abated, and wiping my eyes, I looked up and perceived the poor old woman sorrowfully looking at me.

"I know, dear Lady Genevra, how sad you feel at this proof of your husband's infidelity; and sorry am I that you should have come to those rooms and seen my poor charge," said Pasiphae; and sympathy almost rendered her voice sweet, and almost metamorphosed that weatherbeaten face into one of youth and beauty.

"How long has she been insane?" I asked, my voice almost choked with sobs.

"This autumn coming will be two years."

"Who was she? how came she here?"

"She was always called the Lady Isodore, that is the only name by which I ever knew her. Four years ago master brought her here one night in a fine carriage, and commanded us to treat her the same as if she were our lawful lady: we always did so, and she ruled the household: master seemed very fond of her; and, although he never took her travelling with him, and no one visited her, yet her great love for him appeared to supply the place of all other society. Two years after she came, he seemed to grow tired of her, and they often had furious quarrels; one night, in a difficulty of this sort, forgetting himself, he struck her violently with the butt end of a pistol he held in his hand; she fell upon the floor, and when revived, from that hour was mad. In vain did my unhappy master use every endeavor to restore her: reason had fled—never to return. Since then she has been sometimes wild and gay, sometimes sad—as this evening you saw her. Master, at first, was nearly mad himself with remorse and despair; but, after a while, he recovered from his grief; and, having fixed those rooms up for her, consigned her to my care, and no longer troubled himself about her. From habit I have acquired great influence over her; and even in her wildest moods she will obey me. I think, dear lady, that crime will always meet its just reward, even here on earth; and when I look at master sometimes, I think within myself, 'the hour of retribution for thy sin will surely come some day.'"

"When he came down to the castle some months ago, and told me to have it cleaned and fitted up for the reception of its future lady, I could scarcely credit my ears; and wondered who would marry, and risk her happiness, with a man like him: and when he brought you here, and I saw how beautiful and innocent you were, I trembled for the future. I never intended to tell you this; and master trusted to my fidelity to him, that you should never discover the secret of the uninhabited wing of the castle. You are not more grieved than I that chance or curiosity should have directed you there; your trust in monsieur I know is broken; but, dear lady, I feel it my duty to tell you, that you lean upon a broken stick if you depend on him for faith."

"Hush! Pasiphae; oh! be still; don't say any thing against him: how miserable I feel! I cannot believe that my Rinaldo can be so

depraved; that he, whom I trusted to reform, to render a better, wiser man, could act with such brutality towards a woman."

My soul sickened with horror at such an inhuman action; and I soliloquized, "This was the man whose glowing description of the wrongs and troubles of his childhood had so interested and beguiled me; this was the man who had begged me to exert my influence to reform and purify his heart; who had promised, were I his Mentor, to be as gentle as Telemachus; who had entreated me to be his guardian angel, to warn him from the evils he had committed, yet deprecated: this was the man."

Truly, reason might have reproached me with over self-confidence, and blind trust in the boy-god Cupid, who had so cheated me. And I had dreamed of future years of tranquil happiness and companionship, after the first flush of love had faded, and that profiting by past errors, virtue hereafter should be his patroness; and this was the man on whom I purposed working these miracles. He, who could wantonly inflict personal violence on a woman, and then keep a senseless idiot housed like a dog in an uninhabited part of the house. The veil which shrouded my eyes, was being lifted off, like the mysterious veils of Isis, which conceal the grotesque absurdity of the image adored.

Perceiving Pasiphae still standing before me, her eyes filled with sympathetic tears, I said, "Pasiphae, my good woman, you can go; I would rather be alone; I feel very sad; you had better return to the room; she may awake and miss you."

"You look very unhappy, dear lady, had I not better stay a little while with you?"

"No, no, I prefer being alone; go."

She departed; and then thought usurped her sway; I wished my husband were there then, at that moment, to have told him what I thought of his conduct; but when I reconsidered it, I saw it would do no good; for to reproach a man with his vices, only alienates his affections, and gains his dislike; it does not convince his understanding, for that will not be convinced; nor better his heart, for he always thinks that could not be bettered; and indeed, I think they are quite right, not often being troubled with any. A roar of words is generally the only result, and contempt and hatred the inevitable consequence. I was determined, however, to speak of it to Monsieur de Serval on his return. Then, distressed in mind, caring not if I died that night, I sought my pillow, and wept till lost in the oblivion of slumber.

CHAPTER IX.

Two days afterwards, my husband returned from his hunting party, bringing some game with him. It was now late in the fall, and the forest trees were tinted with many and various dyes, but the charms of nature had no charms for me then, it was all dark and desolate, like my soul. This strange, unlooked for event in my new married life, carried back my thoughts to the miserable days of infancy, and the lonely hours I spent as a wandering beggar girl in the streets of Vienna; the ideas the speculative mind of childhood then indulged in, again returned to me, and I began to take an inverted view of everything, and to look on nature and human beings with an abstracted gaze.

The evening of my husband's return, I was standing on the balcony of the castle, when he rode up to the gates, followed by his grooms; he rode well, and his appearance was distinguished on horseback; seeing me, he lifted his hat, and smiled, then disappeared under the gateway.

Knowing he would expect me to meet him, I slowly dragged myself to the banqueting hall, for so entirely were my feelings toward him changed, that now I would have avoided, where formerly I should joyfully have sprung to his arms.

He stood surrounded by his dogs and servants, giving directions to the grooms: saddles and housings, and game were lying about.

"My love, excuse me a moment; I will see you in your drawing-room presently," said Monsieur de Serval, as I came toward him. Seeing him occupied with his retainers and servants, and glad to be alone, I went to my salon, and sat down to my piano; I began a sweet air from one of the operas I had formerly performed; it was Norma's reproach to Polileo, and, as I sang it, I felt how applicable it was to my own case. A heavy hand was laid firmly on my shoulder, and turning, I saw Pasiphae.

"My lady, Monsieur de Serval has come back; I saw him just now in the hall.'

"I know it, Pasiphae, I have just seen him; how is she, is she quiet?"

"No, my lady, rather wild and noisy this evening; oh, you had better not let him know what you have discovered."

"I shall tell him the truth; I am not afraid to speak the truth, Pasiphae; it should at all times be spoken; no blame shall fall on you; be quieted, you are safe."

The sudden entrance of my husband interrupted us, as I was about asking some question about the unhappy Isodore. At the sight of him, notwithstanding the injury I was satisfied he had done that poor woman, the thousand fascinating remembrances of the last six months crowded fast upon me; and, in looking on his fair face, whatever wickedness that face concealed, I felt I loved him still. It was a delusion, when I imagined I could so quickly learn to hate him. In fact, the transitions of human feelings are like the seasons of the year, so gradually do we pass from one line of feeling to the other extreme, that we are ourselves unconscious when the end is attained. Thus it was with me; I did finally consummate the climax of indifference and contempt towards my husband, but not then: I had not reached it then.

Pasiphae made a low obeisance to her stern master, and left us alone.

As usual, Rinaldo kissed me; I submitted to the caress without returning it: noticing my coldness, a cloud gathered on his brow.

"You receive me very indifferently, Genevra, on my return from a perilous bear hunt."

"I feel indifferent at this moment, Rinaldo.'

"Pray, may I inquire, signora, the cause of this change?" said he, and drew his stately figure to its full height, and regarded me searchingly.

"I can easily explain it, monsieur: I have been in the right wing of the castle, and have seen the lunatic you keep shut up there, Lady Isodore."

He started back, as if shot; then rage shone in his eyes, and he angrily exclaimed,

"You have been to those deserted apartments: how dared you go there, what took you there?"

"My feet, of course, were the mechanical operators on the occasion, monsieur," answered I, derisively; "but curiosity was the only motive I had at first, till gaining access, I beheld the victim of your cruelty."

"You, Genevra, *you*, to pry into my secret affairs: you, whom I have taken from a disgraceful profession, and elevated in rank to any lady in the land, to talk to me of cruelty;" and foaming with rage he tore up and down the room like a madman.

"Would, monsieur, for my peace of mind, my happiness, that you

could undo what you consider so great an honor, and restore me to that 'disgraceful profession,' which I have every reason to regret having left for the arms of a libertine; and a home that has been desecrated by wanton violence. Yes, when the night before last I went to those rooms, and gazed with feelings of intense pity upon that forlorn being, I plainly beheld the life you have hitherto led, and to which you will of course return, after the novelty of my love has worn away. Oh, little did I think, when I pledged you my whole heart and soul at the altar, little did I dream that my affection would be thus requited by living witnesses of shame and horror like this."

I felt excited to a terrible degree: the recollection of her injuries, and my own shame, had excited me to a point I should, ordinarily, have believed myself incapable of: with his arms folded and head depressed, my husband contemplated me.

"If you have finished, signora, I should like to take the liberty of speaking," said he, ironically.

"No, I have not done; I never could find words sufficiently strong to express my disgust and horror of such actions. Other women, perhaps, creatures of sensual, vulgar souls, might feel jealous of the husband's love, forgetting the villany extended to the betrayed one; but I do not. I blame you, not her—whoever she may have been, whatever she may have done."

"Will you hear me, lady?" again demanded he, in the same cool tone as before.

"Yes, monsieur; speak on. I have expressed my thoughts: now speak yours."

Haughtily I flung myself on a couch, and, looking him in the face, awaited his remarks.

"The unfortunate woman you have seen," said Monsieur de Serval—endeavoring to compose his features and his voice to calmness—"that unfortunate is a Spanish woman, from Madrid—her name is Lady Isodore Dosamados—she was of a noble, but impoverished family: when I first became her lover, I never enticed her from habits of morality; she voluntarily became my companion. When I passed through Spain, on my return to Italy, she attached herself to me, and I brought her here: it was her own jealous temper, exasperating my irritable one, which brought her to her present condition. If she chose to excite me to a quarrel, and work upon my feelings until, losing all consciousness, I inflicted a blow that crazed her, it was her own fault; I did not intend to harm her; but immoral women, when enraged, are more like wild beasts than human beings: thus it was

with her. I have provided for her during her insanity, and will continue to do so as long as her wretched life continues."

"I do not believe all you wish to impress me with as truth, in regard to your moderation and kindness to her," I replied, as he paused, evidently expecting me to say something. "I don't believe all you say; for Pasiphae"—I stopped abruptly, remembering my promise not to implicate her.

"What of her?" cried he, sternly.

"Nothing."

"I know what you would say: that she has told you many delightful tales of my cruelty, as you call it; well, let the old woman have her say: women and children should never be contradicted; her crazy ward will not live long; I only retain her now because she can manage her better than any other. When Isodore dies she shall go quickly: and as for you, signora, learn that I take neither reproof nor advice from my wife however much I love her: and beware how you provoke my anger thus a second time."

He stamped out of the room, and his heavy tread re-echoed along the corridor. Amazed at his temper, I sat still, thinking over what he had said, and wondering if he had spoken the truth: which, in that case, would have been some extenuation of his fault, when Pasiphae came rushing into the room, her face expressing the greatest terror, and frantically wringing her hands, she threw herself on her knees before me, and stared, without speaking.

"What is the matter, Pasiphae? what has happened? what ails you?" I cried.

"Oh, terrible! my lady. When I went back to the rooms, an hour ago—when I left you here with master—I found Lady Isodore had got out of her room. Frightened nearly to death, I went to hunt her. It seems she had wandered along the corridor, which is dark and gloomy in the evening, and not seeing the great staircase, tripped over it, and fell from top to bottom, fracturing her skull, and bruising her body dreadfully. I found her lying senseless at the bottom of the steps, and got the men to carry her up to bed. Oh! come with me, dear lady; come quickly? she may be dead even now."

I needed no urging to fly through the dim galleries, to the deserted apartments: Pasiphae following as fast as her legs would carry her. There, stretched on her couch, apparently lifeless, her wild face cut and gashed with wounds, blood streaming from her head, lay poor Isodore. The physician was already in attendance, bathing the blood from her face and head, and two or three of the household domestics,

in astonishment, beheld what they had never dreamed of before,—that the deserted wing of the castle was tenanted by a lunatic. Her existence there, during the period of her insanity, had always been a mystery,—known but to one or two, who carefully guarded the secret, —and they now stood gaping in stupid wonder.

I assisted the physician in bandaging that poor head, and applied aromatic vinegar to her hands and nose. The esculapius eyed her with that peculiar expression physicians bestow on those whose case they consider hopeless. For an hour, perhaps, she lay insensible. I stood rubbing her hands, while tears fell fast from my face on that poor distorted one.

Presently a slight shiver ran through her frame, her eyes opened spasmodically, then closed again: she opened and shut her hands like one in intense pain, then she groaned sorrowfully. Old Pasiphae buried her weeping countenance in the pillows of the bed.

"Doctor," said I, "tell me the real truth: will she recover from these terrible wounds?"

"My dear signora, to be candid with you, I must say, judging from the severity of the fracture on the skull, she never will. She may linger a day or two; but I scarcely think she will survive that length of time; the poor woman has killed herself."

This announcement, delivered with the habitual coolness of gentlemen of that profession, was a thunder-bolt to me.

"Going to die, do you say? Oh, heavens! how dreadful."

After leaving a potion to be taken at a certain hour, the physician went away, promising to call at day-break, and we were left with the sufferer alone. Monsieur de Serval had been informed of the sad event. Pasiphae said he made no remark, but strode past her to his room, and locked himself in. Probably if he felt any sentiment at all, it was one of joy at the prospect of release from his illicit tie. Oh! how selfish are men where their pride or vanity is touched, or their vices exposed.

All night I watched beside her. She remained in a state of stupor, manifesting no life, save by a feeble groan now and then, and sometimes opening those great eyes, and then relapsing into lethargy.

The physician was punctual to his promise, and the gray dawn had scarce been born ere he came. He administered something which momentarily revived her, and in the course of the day she spoke. Oh! strange problem,—spoke sanely! with that singular precision we frequently see in the insane restored to mind. Her memory reverted and dated from the fatal moment when the blow was given which shattered that fair temple of reason.

I had not seen Rinaldo since the hour of ten, the night before, and as he was acquainted with the sad disaster, I wondered at his indifference to what the physician too prophetically foresaw—her death-bed. Alas! thought I, as I leaned over her and watched the slow dawning of mental consciousness, and the confused look and air of intense agony her face showed,—alas! it seems to be my fate to be connected with the worthless and unhappy. My husband, whom I thought so perfect —so repentant of former follies and determined to amend in future—has sadly disappointed me. The world I imagined so beautiful an Elysium, I find the abode of fair deceit, and corrupt and rotten at the core. Oh, life! where are thy pleasures unmingled with the alloy of pain? or is it thus in everything? No sooner do we possess it, than we discover it to be like those lovely apples of the shores of the Red Sea, very fair to look upon; but, when tasted, bitter as wormwood—rotten as dust.

Pasiphae disturbed the sad tenor of my thoughts, by directing my attention to the door, at which stood Monsieur de Serval. Thinking his presence the indication of a better mood,—of a feeling of compassion toward his unhappy mistress,—I sprang toward him, and, forgetting our quarrel, caught his hand in mine. He looked melancholy; and I thought I could trace remorse on those delicate features.

"Oh, Rinaldo!" I cried, "you see what has happened. Last night, while the nurse was absent from the room, she left the apartment, and not seeing the great staircase, stepped off it and fractured her skull. The physician says she cannot survive. How terrible it is—is it not—to see one die who has led such a life? Come close to her; she is regaining her senses—her right mind."

My husband started. He evidently expected to see her crazed still, and did not want to meet face to face, with reason restored, the woman he had brutalized; but as she lay there and looked at him, intellect shone in those dark oriental eyes,—not the quick, sharp, wandering stare of insanity. She recognised him, and feebly beckoned with her hands. I gently drew him to the bed-side. She made a motion as if to be raised, and I lifted her in my arms and laid her head on my breast. The blood had oozed out from the bandages, and her hair was clotted with it: her face was deadly pale, and the mists of death had already settled there; her eyes were growing languid and dim, and hands and feet very cold. My husband looked at her with that expression of self-consciousness of having inflicted wrong which alone can impress the human features, ere the heart is altogether hardened and

depraved. As I have said, her memory flew back four years before, and she thought the quarrel and the deed had just occurred.

"Never mind, dear Rinaldo, I forgive you. Don't grieve, though I die from it. I know I am high tempered; I provoked you to do it; I did not mean to make you angry: don't grieve. Here, Pasiphae, bandage my head; put me to bed: when I recover I will try and be a better woman—more deserving of your love."

In agony I glanced at the physician; she had no idea of her real state; she knew not that death, in a few hours, would take her for his own. The good man eyed her with an air of interest, for this was a strange case.

He approached her, perceiving my wish; and, taking one of her hands in his, said quietly,

"My good lady, listen to me. You are not aware of your condition at present; you are only this moment regaining your mind; you have been insane for several years, till last night, escaping from the room, you fell down stairs, and that sudden concussion has been the means of restoring your mind. It is my duty to tell you that a very few hours will close your life; you cannot live longer than to-morrow."

"Been insane," repeated she, with a scornful, indignant air, "you are dreaming, man; it was only a moment ago Rinaldo and I were quarrelling, and, enraged, he struck me with a pistol. I am very sorry; but, oh! how strangely my head feels: oh! how painful! what ails me? why am I lying here surrounded by people? how dim everything looks. I cannot distinguish anything: why is this? Get lights: I must arise and dress. I must find Rinaldo: where is he?"

She pushed me violently away from her, and with the last effort of strength, sprung from her bed to her feet. Seeing my husband, she threw herself on his neck, and wildly sobbing, kissed him. It was an awful sight, to behold that woman, already in the embraces of death, hugging and clinging to what had once constituted her joy of existence. I felt no jealousy, for I ever possessed this peculiar trait; the moment an object of affection disappoints me, that moment affection and infatuation disappear. I felt a sentiment of bitter shame and regret that I had given myself to such a man;—that is what I experienced as I witnessed this strange scene.

He looked annoyed,—not grieved; and once or twice tried to lay her down on the bed, but her personal strength, to which was added additional power by the strong excitement under which she labored, frustrated his endeavor. Her disordered hair hung down her back; the bruised and bandaged head, covered with blood, presented a

ghastly sight. Her thin hands, which clasped his neck, scratched and wounded; and the long night robe she wore dabbled with blood.

'No, no, no," she cried; "I have you; I have you: now you shall not go till you promise to love me, and forgive me my anger."

"Take her away, Pasiphae: rid me of the mad woman," shouted my husband. "Why do you stand there, stupidly inactive, when you see me thus annoyed? Take her off my neck: put her in bed."

At the sound of his loud vindictive voice she relapsed her hold, staggered back, and mournfully gazing on his enraged face, shivered, turned, if possible, more pale,—then fell flat on the floor!

"Oh, miserable man!" I exclaimed, as the nurse raised the death-stricken, inanimate form, and laid it on the bed, while the doctor darted looks of contempt at him. "Oh, apology for humanity! and have you no pity for the unhappy sufferer from your vices?"

"Why did you summon me here, madam, to witness this mummery? We all must die some day, it matters not how. Do I wish to behold the death-bed of a lunatic? Can *I* assist her final departure? Why have you called me?—to anger me, I suppose."

"Well, monsieur, if you think it too great a condescension to see her die, go; leave the room,—I will attend the poor dying creature."

Without replying, save by a look of scorn and anger, he departed. I could easily understand that he felt doubly angered when he reflected (as he must have done) that my discovery of his illicit connexion necessarily would weaken, if not wholly obliterate, my love for him. It was this that inspired his rage, and made him hate the unfortunate object of it. His love for me was still unabated;—not so mine. A bar of ice seemed placed between us. In this respect women and men differ greatly, for though a man may indulge himself in many loves, yet he generally returns to the lawful one. On the contrary, when a woman's affections are once thoroughly alienated, they seldom return to the first object of attachment.

I cannot think of that woman's death-bed without bitter regret, nor write this portion of my memoir without dropping tears upon the page. Recovering from the stupor into which she had fallen when he repulsed her,—her eyes roved anxiously round in search of him. Not seeing him, she closed them again, and remained motionless. An hour passed by: finding she did not stir, I felt her hands and feet,—they were growing colder and colder, and her eyes more dim. She was an hour nearer death.

"She will be dead before twilight, lady," said the physician,

having felt her pulse. "Poor thing! her death is very painful; she has suffered much."

"Yes, I have suffered much," was her audible reply, to our astonishment, and she uplifted her eyes and joined her hands as if praying. I remembered Monsieur de Serval's description of his mother's death-bed, and wondered how he could treat thus the last moments of his neglected mistress. So easy is it to express fine sentiments which one does not feel, and never practise! Fine words cost nothing, and may be equally well said by a bad as a noble soul; but fine actions *must* result from a good heart.

Gradually twilight drew near, and she was sinking momently. Raised on my breast, I held one hand in mine;—she seemed laboring to say something. I stooped to the level of her ear, and tried to catch the sound. Her voice was low, faint, and broken.

"Dear lady," at last I thought I heard her say; "I thank you for your kindness, whoever you may be, and —," she paused, as if to reflect, "tell him I forgive him the injury he has done me."

Backward she fell from my supporting arms on her pillow: slower and slower came her breath; more fixed grew her eyes; her hands grasped convulsively at the bed clothes. I heard a rattling sound from her throat; then the eyelids remained half closed, the mouth half open; the hands released their hold, and the physician, bending over her, said,—"Madame, she is dead!"

I burst into tears, and fled from the chamber of death to my own room, and there wept long and bitterly, both for her and for myself.

* * * * *

Pasiphae told me, some days after, that the corpse had been buried in a cemetery two miles from the castle,—that M. de Serval had gone to the room and looked at the dead, and she saw, or fancied she saw, him shed tears. The old woman, now her insane charge was dead,—so strong is habit,—really seemed to regret the loss, and continually talked of her. For myself, I felt wretched, and wept at early dawn, at bright noon, and again when dark night came on. I thought of my husband: I regretted his behaviour; and notwithstanding all, I wished—oh, I don't know what I wished; but one thing I know is certain, that death, had he come then, would not have found me unwilling to go.

For two weeks after Isodore's death, I remained alone in my apartments. The communication between them and monsieur's having been, by my order, closed, lest he might intrude upon me. I neglected my dress, and my long ringlets hung in wild disorder around my face.

I wore a black dress, as if in mourning, for my soul was mourning; and thus attired, and thus lonely, I sat opposite a mirror, in which I beheld myself,—not the joyous bride of six months ago, but pale, dejected, and melancholy; and thus I sat and mused to no purpose, when my waist was clasped by a well known hand, and a mouth, whose kisses I can never forget, imprinted one on my cheek, as Rinaldo's voice murmured in my ear:

"Genevra, I am miserable, living thus without you. Let the past be forgotten and forgiven: let us love each other as we did before this sad affair. You cannot so quickly have learned to hate me, have you?"

I hesitated a moment, I confess: then love triumphed over every other feeling, and throwing myself into his arms, we fervently kissed each other, and he promised to lead a better life. Of that, however, from what I now comprehended of my husband's character and habits, I had little hope; for any habit, when once confirmed, be it *rouéism*, gambling, or drinking, obtains such fascinating influence over the mind, that it is rarely, if ever, relinquished. Still I endeavored to cherish a fondness, which I felt his outlandish behavior would soon oblige me to abandon.

The novelty of possession had now worn off, and he began to wish for other society than mine; accordingly he resumed his acquaintance with the neighboring nobility, and frequently the banqueting hall resounded with their boisterous conviviality to a late hour of night. Then my husband would be carried in the arms of his grooms in a state of drunkenness to bed, while his guests were borne off in a similar condition to theirs. At first, when I gently reproached him with his excesses, he seemed grieved, listened to me quietly, and answered sorrowfully, that he knew he did wrong; but soon this gentleness changed to roughness, and if I spoke reprovingly, he sternly bade me be silent, and not presume to admonish him, of what he was the best judge of. Thus in alternations of coldness, reproaches, quarrels, and reconciliations, a year of married life passed away.

As I became more estranged from him, I missed the gayeties and pleasures of Naples, which his affections had for a few months compensated me for the loss of. I often thought of Blanche, of my teacher, and the kind Madame Bonni. Monsieur Belmont had heard nothing of Blanche, though within the year, inquiry had often been made by him concerning her. My kind hostess had not forgotten me, and her love was often sent; my teacher's letters I carefully treasured, and read each one with double care; they seemed like tidings of life: for

the quiet chateau, the rustic neighborhood, could scarcely be designated by that name; and my regular existence, systematic as a clock, partook largely of lifeless monotony. Rinaldo, it is true, made amends to bacchus for my dullness, for night after night found him at the gaming table, playing high, or carousing with his noisy companions. When, sometimes, I saw him excited with wine, I could with difficulty realize that it was the same refined man, whose sweet voice, and gentle ways had won my virgin heart, on the beautiful shores of Parthenope. Guilo, my husband's valet, said that although his master had always lived high and been very gay, yet, during the first months of our marriage, he had behaved much better than formerly, and the worthy domestic appeared astonished to see him return to his old habits; but he did not reflect, that the object for which this good behavior was cultivated was attained, and there was no longer any need of playing a part.

I sometimes took long walks through that fair valley, and among the lofty hills which majestically surrounded it. I amused and entertained myself with the observation of nature, in its many different, yet all beautiful modifications; I saw the birds, as they floated on the wing; I saw the waving of the foliage of the forest trees, and the clouds as they moved through the dewy atmosphere, for an eternal mist ever hung over those mountains and that valley. The shepherds tended their flocks there, and thither in harvest and vintage time came the pretty village girls, and the hardy mountaineers, to gather the fruitful grape. Sometimes sitting beneath some lofty tree, I reflected on the sottishness of the heart, which, the more it possesses, the more it wants; I wondered if there was any such thing as happiness, in what it consisted, and where to be found; and then I wondered if it was exemplified by the epicurean belief, that happiness must consist in banishing from the mind all painful thoughts, and wholly surrendering oneself, spiritually and bodily, to pleasure: or if the doctrine of the stoics was true, that happiness or misery, pleasure or pain, was a principle of the mind, and could not be affected by external objects; that if the mind was properly tutored, it would be incapable of any other feeling than that of rational, quiet contentment; it would be insensible to the cares and sorrows of life, regarding all things with the proud eyes of ethereal, idealized philosophy. I inclined towards the stoics, and resolved, if possible, so to school my mind, that no earthly disappointment should surprise or vex me; but, unfortunately, it is much easier to make resolves, than to keep them.

Sometimes I extended my rambles to Isodore's grave,—a simple

mound of earth, unmarked by tablet or tomb-stone. She had now been dead several months, and the grass and wild flowers grew luxuriantly above the mound. I often sat down on it, and fixing my eyes on the starry worlds over head, at twilight time, sought to penetrate the secrets of futurity, and read my destiny in their eternal light. I thought of the thousands and thousands of years that had passed into eternity since first they were hung there. "Why! oh, why?" I cried aloud from the fulness of my heart; "why is it that the beautiful, the great, the good, all moulder back to dust, and are forgotten, while these shine on, bright as when first placed there, coeval with the Great Spirit, from time to eternity?—while we die, and, oh, worse than all! know not what is to come hereafter!" Such gloomy thoughts occupied my mind, as I slowly returned home after twilight had deepened into sombre night, my clothes damp with dew.

"Pasiphae," said I, as I flung myself into my fauteuil, tired and sorrowful; "get me some dry clothes, and arrange the fire. Where is Monsieur de Serval? is he at home?"

"Master was inquiring for you, my lady, this evening, and I sought for you, but could not find you, when Guilo told me he saw you go out the castle gate, and take the forest road. I told master, and he went away to his shooting gallery."

As she spoke he entered the room, in his hunting dress, looking very pale after his night's carouse. We kissed each other; but the salute had little of the fervor of former days.

"I was looking for you this evening, Genevra, but you were not in your apartments."

"No; I went to take a walk in the woods."

He began whistling as he walked up and down, evidently wishing Pasiphae gone. Anticipating his wish, after I had changed shoes and stockings, I dismissed her.

"I wished to see you," said he, after she had gone, "to tell you that I am going away again, a hundred miles back into the country, on a hunting party, to be absent a week. When I return I shall bring a friend with me, the Count Calabrella, to spend some days."

"Yes," said I, mechanically.

Continuing his walk, he looked at me as I sat.

"You don't look well of late, Genevra; your face has lost its freshness; your eyes their brightness."

"I feel altered externally and internally."

"I think I am something changed myself within the last year. Let me see," said he, reflectively; "yes, this is the anniversary of our

marriage:—the year has been an eventful one to me." He seemed to expect some remark, and I determined to touch him to the quick.

"Yes," I replied, as if unconsciously; "it is five months since Isodore died: how sad her death-bed was!"

His face flushed, and he exclaimed fiercely:

"Why do you speak of that woman? why do you remind me of her? She is dead; well, let her rest in peace, and cease to torment me with recollections of her."

But I wished him to hear of her. I thought it only an act of justice to her injured memory, and I continued quietly:

"You feel, then, no remorse for your past conduct toward her, monsieur? no regret, yet she loved you much; and if she erred, it may have been through unhappy circumstances, or through an overweening attachment to you."

"She sinned through nothing of the sort," cried he sharply,—"her affair with me was not the only one she ever had. She had been a notorious woman long before I ever saw her. As for the deep regrets you talk of, I feel none. I consider I acted honorably in taking care of a lunatic, and suffering myself to be frequently annoyed by the antics of a crazy woman. She is better off where she is."

I saw my husband was impenetrable to any feeling on the subject, and feeling misanthropic myself, I cared not to enter into a wordy war. Relapsing into silence and thought, I sat motionless. One thing I plainly perceived, that he was piqued that I pitied the dead Isodore, and manifested neither anger, contempt, nor hatred for her memory; he would rather have seen me furiously jealous, retaining the recollection of her error, and hating her name. But I had lost all hatred for anything and everything, and was sinking into a listless apathy.

"Well, farewell till we meet again," said Monsieur de Serval, abruptly, after a moment's pause.

"Farewell, monsieur."

We shook hands, and he departed. I watched from my window, and saw his close travelling carriage rolled into the court-yard. Guilo placed numerous packages, boxes of cigars, and comfites on the front seat; then my husband entered it, his hat slouched over his eyes, and enveloped in his great coat. Guilo mounted behind; the postillion huzza'd, and they rattled away down the valley road.

I did not miss him; his society was no longer necessary to my very existence. We could live apart for days, weeks, months, without the same regrets and longings we should have experienced during the first months of married life. During his absence I busied myself in house-

hold affairs, rode on horseback, played and sang, and endeavored to kill time as fast as possible. I was very young, and my tastes and habits still bordered closely on girlhood—I might almost say childhood. Pasiphae, with her weird-like countenance, as she sat over the fire in the banqueting hall on those chilly autumnal nights, and told me strange ghost stories, often laughed at the childish alarm I showed at her tales. She was my confidante, and, in fact, only friend, in that wild region. To her I confided all my thoughts, my griefs, and fears, and hopes. She sympathized with, but could not advise me.

The week of his absence passed quietly away: nothing of moment occurred worth relating, and I was sitting in my salon reading a romance, when Pasiphae entered, saying Guilo had arrived in advance of his master, and announced that Monsieur de Serval would be with me within half an hour. Upon the delivery of his message I consulted my mirror. Pasiphae declared herself satisfied with my appearance. I remember with vivid distinctness the dress I wore: it was a dark, deep crimson velvet, made high in the neck, and long sleeves concealed my arms: the rich, heavy folds of the robe swept the floor; a Grecian head-dress of lama lace formed my coiffure, and my hair fell in long ringlets to my waist.

"Ah, my lady; I never saw you look so beautiful," said the faithful creature, in an ecstacy of delight; for the slightest thing will throw an Italian into a fit of enthusiasm. "That head-dress is so charming, and the robe so handsome! Ah, if fine dress only made people happy, it would be worth wishing for."

"Pasiphae, I think I heard monsieur's carriage driving into the court-yard. See if it is him."

As I spoke, I heard voices and heavy steps in the hall, and before she could reach the door, it was opened hastily, and my husband entered, followed by a figure so wrapped up in coats and shawls, that I could scarcely discern what it was. Pasiphae hastened to relieve this muffled form of its encumbrances, after disburdening my husband: and when the stranger, stepping toward me, bowed,—the first glance at his face told me that I beheld the stranger of the opera. The same beautiful eyes were bent upon me, and the low deep tones of his voice struck my ear as he said:

"Madame, I am happy to make the acquaintance of the wife of my friend."

I felt the blood rush to my brow, my neck, my very hands, as I tremblingly replied:

"Count, you are most welcome to our home."

Rinaldo did not notice my embarrassment; he was occupied in giving orders about the luggage, the game, and a hundred other things; and when he had completed these commands, turning to me, who had been saying some confused nothings to the visitor, he said:

"Come, count, and you, madame, let us proceed to the supper room, and after we have rendered our duties there, we will return hither for conversation."

All my husband's movements were abrupt and singular, otherwise I should have been astonished at this sudden interruption. Count Calabrella offered me his arm, and leaning on that strong arm, and looking on that handsome, energetic face, which afterwards became, oh! how dear to me, I followed my stern lord, who strode before, to the banqueting hall. Rinaldo sat at the head of the table, myself and his guest at each side. By the brilliant light of the lamps around us, I could more fully observe the stranger. The count was opposite in appearance to my husband; he was taller, of an athletic form, strong, and manly. His eyes, large, languid, yet sparkling, sometimes flashed fire, sometimes were the impersonation of repose. His hands and feet were rather large, not so delicate as Monsieur de Serval's. His whole appearance was rather massive, not feminine or soft, as was the look, the whole person of my husband.

Rinaldo's face was flushed from wine, and he talked loudly and gayly, not to me, but to his friend. He talked most of his ill success on the bear hunt, cursing the ill attendance of the servants and grooms. He drank glass after glass of wine, and his evanescent spirits grew higher and higher under the influence. I regarded him with feelings of painful regret, but he seemed not to observe my earnest looks, save by a return glance of scorn.

The count appeared embarrassed. I saw he felt for me and for his friend, and looked relieved when the repast was over, and we returned to the salon. He must have seen the coldness existing between my husband and myself, for he also seemed infected by it, and after several efforts at a general conversation, asked me to favor him with a song. I did so with alacrity, to relieve the tedium which seemed to pervade the drawing room: yet though I sang, I did so mechanically. One idea dwelt in my mind—who was this Count Calabrella, this man, whose beautiful eyes had so long before haunted me, like a foreshadowing dream of futurity? How strange that he should so unexpectedly cross my path now, when a married woman; now, when his acquaintance could be nothing to me. Still, the same presentiment haunted me, that my destiny in future would have something to do

with him; and as I glanced around at him, as he sat near my husband, listening to the song, leaning on the arm of the sofa, his strongly marked features distinctly shown by the glancing firelight, what a contrast did that manly form, so energetic, breathing, living,—speaking of nobility of soul,—what a contrast did it not present to my fair, yet dissipated, reckless husband! He had thrown himself in an attitude of ease upon a sofa, and with his eyes closed, seemed half asleep. That was scarcely polite to his guest, but Rinaldo cared not what any one thought; he cared more for his own comfort, than for fixed rules of etiquette.

The count drew his chair towards me, and remarked, "Your castle, madame, is delightfully situated here, in this beautiful ravine; I have often heard Monsieur de Serval speak of his mountain home, but never, till now, had an opportunity of seeing it."

"Yes, the castle is a charming summer residence, though rather dreary in winter."

"I have never," continued he, "been so far north before; my attendance on his majesty has hitherto prevented me from travelling to any great extent; and Naples and its environs, you know, do not afford any great variety to one who has been accustomed to it a lifetime."

"You are, then, from Naples, beautiful Naples!" Numerous recollections were recalled by that name; and I looked down, and almost unconsciously sighed. When I raised my eyes, I met those of the stranger, bent curiously on my face: he seemed endeavoring to read my thoughts; and I blushed as I met that look, though I scarce knew why myself.

"Yes," said he, in reply to my remark, "beautiful Naples was my birth-place; and there I have lived the principal part of my life."

Here Rinaldo, raising himself from his recumbent posture, joined us, and began turning over the music leaves on the piano.

"My wife sings one of these songs magnificently, count," said he, as he sought among the other music for it. "Oh! here it is: oblige us madame, by singing it."

It was the song for Ajesha: 'We have lived and loved together in sunlight and in tears;' and I felt the tears gush into my own eyes, as I executed it. It brought back, bright as yesterday, the night of its first representation—Blanche's spirited acting—the presence and applause of the royal family. The tones lingered on my lips, as if they obeyed the impulse of my heart, and by remaining, could recall bygone hours more forcibly to mind.

"That is a charming melody,' said the count; and it is needless to admire that voice, whose far-spread fame has roused all Italy."

I felt weary, and, as it was growing late, on a look from my husband, we retired; he, accompanying his friend to a bedchamber, and I returning to my cheerful apartment, where, by the blazing fire, I sat down to dream and reflect, on what, alas! on what too many mortals while away existence in—dreams, unsubstantial, unreal dreams.

CHAPTER X.

I HAD for some weeks remarked the visits of several mysterious looking strangers, who came often, and were closeted long with Monsieur de Serval in his studio. These men were dressed in the costume of the peasantry, but they all wore brown cloaks, with cowls drawn over their faces, which they jealously preserved from sight, perhaps from pity to those unfortunate hearts on whom they should bestow their glances. There was something very strange about them; and as none of the domestics knew from whence they came, or whither they went, I determined to ask my husband their business at the castle.

The morning after his arrival I rose early. I heard my husband move about his room till a late hour, when silence proclaimed he had gone to rest. We no longer sank to rest, cradled in each other's arms—and sometimes when my lonely, impassioned heart, fairly ached for companionship, I compared our present estrangement with the joyful hours we had formerly spent together; and then the midnight hour saw convulsions of passion, I should have been ashamed any one should witness, save that faithful, silent monitor, time; but it was no fault of mine: the gay *roué*, whose fickle fancy was momently caught by my beauty and virtue, had wearied by possession; the same face, the same enduring love, no longer attracted him; he had not known his own heart when he promised fidelity: he was incapable of it. I sometimes felt disposed to forgive him the wild life he had led during the past year, could I have seen any indications of a reformation; I could have returned to my old love, and have been happy once more, would he have acted differently, but he would not: to reproaches, alienations, and recriminations, had succeeded a polite

coldness, which, between husband and wife, means far more than the alternations of hot and cold feeling.

I often wept myself to sleep, hugging my pillow to me for company; my mind dwelt in the past, or speculated on the future: it was void and empty, for it is only when we are with one we love that we live in the present, and who loved me now, who save old Pasiphae?

I sought the salon, where, to my surprise, I saw the count seated. On entering, he rose, placed a chair for me, and made some general observation on the beautiful day. I replied, seated myself, and fixed my eyes on the fire, for there was a magnetic attraction in those orbs that influenced me strangely when I met them;—the gentleman suddenly remarked,

"Madame, you are much improved since I first saw you, the night of your first appearance at Naples."

"Ah! you saw me then at that time?"

"Yes, and I shall never forget your look, your manner, your acting and whole appearance: the tones of your voice, indeed the whole scene is engraven on my mind."

The *tone* in which he said this, made the expression, and sent the blood to my cheek. How true it is, that looks and tones give the sense to conversation, far more than the words themselves; I knew not what reply to make to this extravagant compliment, and bowed in silence.

"I never thought my friend would ever marry," he continued, I thought to relieve my obvious embarrassment,—"he used to be so volatile and gay; but I am glad he has, and that the correction of youthful errors has fallen to the guidance of one so gentle." And as he looked at me, the same light shone in his eyes. "We have been almost like brothers for many years; at one time he was aide-de-camp to his majesty, and during that period we were constantly together; being older than he, I naturally advised and guided him; but now I see how much better he is tutored by that power that rules the world, the influence of love."

The arch smile that played upon his lips, called the blushes to my cheeks, while my mournful heart, alas, too truthfully denied the assertion.

At this moment a servant announced the breakfast, and the count rising offered me his arm, and we went in together; Rinaldo was not there: I sent to request the honor of his presence, while the count entertained me delightfully, with a description of his journey to the shores of the Dead Sea, and travels in Arabia. His descriptive powers

were fine, and I listened eagerly; we were thus engaged when Rinaldo entered; the lassitude and dissipated air my husband had acquired of late, from negligent habits, had never so forcibly struck me before, as then, when he came towards me; his eyes were sunken, his form thin, and the expression of his features cadavorous; he looked worn out: he smiled on his friend, said 'good morning' to me, then sat down on the other side of the table.

"The morning is fine, count," he remarked, as the attendant handed him a cup of coffee; "it is a charming day for rambling, and I will show you over the grounds."

"I shall go with pleasure," answered he, and then continued his description of Mecca, and the grave of the Prophet.

"Of what are you speaking?" asked my husband.

"My travels in Arabia," said the count, "I have been there within the last three years. Since we parted at Naples, I travelled through the East."

"Ah!" said Rinaldo, "I did not know that; how desolate those countries of the Levant are now: what a contrast they present when we recall the olden time."

"Desolate enough, and the means of travelling miserable, and stopping places filthy.

"All life, all commerce, all enterprise seems progressing onward to the North of Europe, leaving the East, and even us, far behind; we are on the decline, never probably to be revived again.

"Thus it is with every thing on earth, every thing has its beginning, its zenith, and its fall. But do not let us involve madame in a didactic controversy, we will continue our philosophies when alone, my friend," said he, bowing to me, as I accepted his escort to my salon, when my husband and himself departed for their walk.

As I crossed the corridor to my bed chamber for my tapestry, to amuse myself during the morning, I again met some of those shrouded forms which seemed to haunt, like ghosts, the castle. One of them, pushing partially back the cowl he wore, disclosed to my view a remarkably sunburnt, repulsive physiognomy, whose harsh dark features appeared to me the index to a harsh dark soul.

"God save thee, lady, but I wish to see the master, Monsieur de Serval,—is he at home?"

"No, my good fellow," said I, in a gentle tone, wishing to ascertain what these men wanted; "what is your business with him, tell me, and I will communicate it to him when he returns?"

'We have orders, lady, from our chief,"—at that one of the others

frowned on him, and he confusedly went on, "that is—I mean to say —it is a private matter of business with the master, I cannot tell any other than him."

"Well," said I, "you can go to the lower hall and wait for him, he will return soon;" and calling Guilo, I bade him conduct them thither, and added, in a whisper, an admonition to watch and not permit them to depart till my husband returned. They seemed unwilling to remain, and the chief said he would come again at a more convenient season, but I gently detained them, bidding them wait monsieur's return; reluctantly they followed Guilo, who regarded them with suspicious glances.

An hour afterwards I was walking on the terrace, when I saw Rinaldo approaching, with Count Calabrella; he was speaking with great earnestness, and peering with penetrating eyes into those of his friend; they were evidently engaged in some deeply interesting discussion, in which the count, from his cloudy brow and downcast eyes, did not seem to acquiesce.

As they ascended the stone steps, at the summit of which I stood, both became silent, and the count, lifting his hat to me, made some remark about the beauty of the grounds. I hastened to tell my husband about the strangers.

"Monsieur de Serval," addressing him by his sirname, as was most polite, "three strangers of very mysterious appearance, whom I have often seen here before, now await you in the lower hall. As you were out, I asked their business, but they declined telling, and preferred waiting your return."

"In the lower hall did you say?" said he abruptly, and with a disturbed look. "Why did you not send them to the studio? It must be him," he added as if to himself; "what can have happened? how strange!" and, without saying another word to me, he walked rapidly away, and entered the castle. I looked after him with surprise, for by his startled looks and distorted manner, I plainly saw that this was some affair of importance, and could not refrain from wondering what it was. I had a vague presentiment that his conversation with the count in some way related to these men. I could have wished to have asked the count what had been the subject of their conversation, but he was almost a perfect stranger. I could not do so with propriety, and so, silently, he and I retired to the salon. There was something so inexpressibly delicate and gentle in his manners, in his looks, in every thing he said or did, that it threw a charm around him, and this magic influence soon extended to those of his acquaintance. He had

sojourned with us but two days, and yet had ingratiated himself into the good graces of the domestics, and by his fine conversational powers had whiled away some of the many lonely hours I daily passed. My husband too possessed, at first sight, the most attractive and winning ways, but these soon gave place to capricious variations of feeling, which soon ended in complete indifference, like all *roués* the difficulty constituted the charm; that overcome, the graces, the charms soon vanished.

I often regretted—as I sat alone, gazing on the fickle fire-light—often regretted having left the stage and having exchanged the certainty of a brilliant fame, unbounded admiration, and a fortune in perspective, for the uncertainty of love.

My husband had been closeted with his visitors two or three hours when I saw them depart, and he came from the room, pale and anxious; with hasty strides he reached the court-yard, and having ordered one of the fleetest horses to be saddled, mounted, quick as lightning, and rode off.

I pulled the bell, and Guilo answered the appeal.

"Guilo, where in the name of heaven has Monsieur de Serval gone to? I this moment saw him depart on horse-back."

"I know not, madame. He seemed very angry at something: he swore and muttered to himself as he mounted. I supposed you knew where he was going, my lady."

"No; I know not. I have no idea."

"I wish I could tell you, my lady; but master has acted so singularly lately, I am not surprised at anything he does. I never saw him seem so queer."

"Did the strange men take the same road your master did?"

"No, my lady; they went away before him and took the opposite direction."

"Very well, Guilo. you can go."

"Will you be pleased to have dinner served now?"

"What is the hour?"

"Five o'clock, Madame."

"Well, serve it, and announce it to the count."

Guilo did so. When I went to dinner, my guest had preceded me: he looked very thoughtful. When I said that we must excuse Monsieur de Serval, he, having been called away by a matter of business, his face clouded; but it passed quickly away, and he was as entertaining as usual.

That night, after I had retired to rest, the clattering of horses' hoofs

sounded on the valley road; they neared the house; now they were beneath my window; then stopped: then I heard the stamping of heavy boots, and loud voices in the hall; then I distinguished Rinaldo's piquant voice—for he had a bright voice, soft and cheering; and next I heard him enter his own room. Satisfied that he had returned safe, I composed myself to sleep, wondering what this mystery could mean,—longing to ask, yet restrained by pride.

Next day Rinaldo appeared to have recovered himself entirely from his temporary agitation, and I ventured to inquire, indirectly, the cause of his sudden journey. He carelessly replied, that it was a small matter of business which demanded his presence, and avoided the subject. I was not satisfied, however; I knew better; but I also waived the subject, as I could elicit nothing by questions.

A fortnight of dubious calm succeeded. Three gentlemen of the neighborhood, my husband's friends, came to visit him. The same old scenes of riot and late hours were enacted over again; but I observed that the count avoided, as far as was consistent with politeness, all participation in these midnight revels, and often retired early to his chamber to avoid them. This added to his attractions in my eyes; and meeting me one evening, as I was gliding past the banquet-hall,—whence I heard the drunken revels, the noisy songs and clamorous uproar of my husband and his friends,—he came to my side, and, quietly placing my arm in his, silently conducted me to my salon, closed the door, to shut out those noisy sounds, drew my fauteuil to the fire, then placed another for himself, and looking at me very sadly, said in mournful tones:

"This behaviour of your husband is very distressing to you, I know."

"Yes, it saddens me much to see him wasting his life in such dissipations."

"Has he always led this sort of life since he married you?"

"The first months of our wedded life we spent happily. He acted differently then."

"Rinaldo always was very wild, very unprincipled in his views of women, yet the first day or two of my arrival here, I confidently thought you had reformed him."

"Alas! that is not so. I wish it were."

"Marriage is a mere lottery at best," said the count, thoughtfully. "I have always viewed it in that light, and my observation of its unhappy results, has deterred me from choosing a wife. Some frequently draw prizes; most get blanks. You, dear lady, have unfortunately—" He paused, and did not complete the sentence, probably

fearing to wound my feelings; for so strange it is, though you may despise your husband, yet to hear him depreciated, will wound.

"In a month from now, I shall probably be at Epirus. I only feel happy in continual motion: travelling, war, politics—something to excite. Onward, seems to be my watchword; onward, as we on our little planet contiually whirl round, and other worlds follow us, unceasing, eternal, in the sublime organization of nature."

I had never seen my guest so animated before; his eyes sparkled, his alabaster face lit up with the warm glow of feeling and enthusiasm. The announcement of his intended departure, somewhat surprised me, as we had expected to retain him for several weeks.

"We shall regret your departure, count," said I, trying to force a smile, but it was a sad one. "Monsieur de Serval intimated that we were to have the pleasure of your society for some time to come." As I spoke, my eyes met his, and their expression of intense interest riveted mine: those beautiful, sad eyes,—those eyes of love, of ingenuousness, of truth and fidelity. He sighed, and withdrew them, and I resumed my contemplation of the carpet of the salon.

A long, loud laugh, from the apartment where my husband was revelling, startled me. I thought I heard footsteps coming, and not wishing to see him in his present condition, I rose to return to my room.

"Good night, dear lady," said the count. "Remember me in your prayers, for I need them." Glance met glance, but I tore mine away, and I felt, as I sought my repose, that my fluttering heart, and crimsoned cheek, told sad tales against me.

Rinaldo was ill next day from excitement, and his friends in much the same condition. Monsieur D'Artagnan, and Monsieur Porthos, were men of middle age, corpulent and lazy; high livers, high drinkers, fond of all sorts of rural sports, and all sorts of amusements. They generally favored, or rather bored, me with their compliments and society every day after dinner, when Rinaldo usually lounged about a little while, ere he and they disappeared together, to arrange their plans for the evening. The count spent hours and hours with me, reading, singing, conversing, receiving and imparting information. These consolations, these sympathies, between a married woman and a handsome male friend, are dangerous. The loneliness of heart, the isolation a woman who has been slighted in her affections feels, strongly induces her to love the society, and the self-deluding friendship of an interesting man. This friendship soon becomes love, and then—where are they?

* * * * * * *

Some evenings after this, twilight found me in the beautiful garden of the castle, seated beneath a widespreading palm tree, that threw far before me its blooming branches. From beneath this natural bower, lulled to repose by the beautiful scene before me; by the sweet, balmy air that played around me, and the glorious sky above me, I contemplated the landscape.

The sun went down behind a veil of heavy purple clouds, whose ragged edges were tinted with his parting rays; his smile dwelt lingeringly along the mountain's brow, as if he *must*, yet wished *not*, to say farewell. The warm, oriental light illumined the summits of the trees, and showed forth more distinctly the tall gothic turrets of the castle. Part of the building remained in shadow, and the rising ground of terrace behind me concealed my view of the court-yard and its marble fountain.

The grounds, disposed in flower beds of divers shapes and patterns, were thickly planted with exotic flowers, which, as if tired of their admiration of the god of day, now drooped their heads in mournfulnesss at his departure;—the golden butterfly flew gayly from flower to flower; his purple and gold wings glittering in the glowing light; —the grasshopper hopped on the tall thick grass; and the birds sang in the trees, carrolling their love-notes so thrillingly, I almost envied them their joy. Their songs were the only voices of the hour, and in listening to them I felt soothed, consoled: sweeter, calmer thoughts came over me,—etherealized feelings,—and leaning my head against the rough bark of the trees, I fell into a gentle slumber.

Cracking of brushwood, breaking of boughs, aroused me from my dreamy trance. I started, looked around;—I heard the sound of coming feet, and presently my husband emerged from the copse. The sun had disappeared, and the mellow dusk was gathering her dusky veil around me. Arousing myself from dreams, I spoke to him as he seated himself by me. He looked absorbed with melancholy preoccupation, as was his wonted air of late:—his dress was disorderd.

"What an exquisite evening!" he observed; "how gloriously that sun declines along the hills."

"Yes, it is indeed beautiful. I have been watching his departure for the last hour."

"I have been on a long hunt through the forest: some of the people said they thought they had discovered a bear's trail; but I sought in vain;—I found no traces of one."

"How can you like those bear hunts; they are so dangerous?"

"They are exciting:—I like excitements."

"We mutually became silent, watching the clouds drifting across the sky, and the different hues of eve, as they blended into one. The air began to distil dew heavily. I rose, apprehensive that my health would be injured by exposure to it. As I rose upon my feet, a strange sensation came over me. Earth, air, mountains, clouds,—all objects seemed to swim before my eyes. I felt as if falling, I knew not where, and stretching out my hands for support, instinctively, I was received into my husband's arms, and lost all consciousness.

When I recovered life, I found myself in my salon, my husband and Pasiphae anxiously bending over me: my bodice was unloosed, my hair undone. I gasped for breath, and partly raising myself, leaned on some one's shoulder;—it was Rinaldo's. Everything in the room seemed indistinct, confused.

"Dear lady, what ails thee? what has happened?" I heard poor Pasiphae say, as she bathed my face and rubbed my hands.

"Your mistress fainted as we sat in the garden together," was my husband's reply, rendered inarticulate by tears. He kissed me repeatedly, smoothed my hair, and manifested by his emotion the grief he felt, not only at my illness, but his own incomprehensible, cruel, conduct.

When strong aromatics had thoroughly brought back to earth my truant senses, Pasiphae watched that night my fitful slumber, broken only by strange starts and convulsive movements that half affrighted her: my husband tenderly attended me. For days (they said) my life hung on a thread: and when exhausted nature resuscitated to life and health once more, I had a beautiful, a lovely boy!

My health for weeks after his birth continued delicate. I seldom left my room: that cherished infant, whose life had so nearly been purchased by my own, my constant companion. And Rinaldo was kinder in those days; if our old feelings were not renewed, at least our child formed a connecting tie,—we seemed drawn more nearly to each other. Pasiphae manifested, at seeing the child, the joy of a child itself at seeing a new toy: she would carry the little thing in her arms, admire its undefined features, and playfully caress its tiny hands.

Count Calabrella, at my husband's urgent entreaty, prolonged his visit, and often came to pay his compliments; the charms of his conversation and manners won daily upon my esteem; I never could look upon that animated face, nor listen to that melodious voice, which distilled such noble thoughts, such chivalrous sentiments, without wishing that Rinaldo was more like him,—that he did not desecrate to unworthy uses the abilities with which nature had endowed him. Time

fleeted, and I again resumed my walks in the castle garden, and on the terrace, in which Pasiphae sometimes followed me, bearing the child.

We named him Raphael, a fancy of his father's it was to bestow on the little one the name of the great painter. As day by day developed his senses and he became conscious of the difference of persons, and would extend his baby hands toward me, and weep if I left him, I realized in this love a mother's pride, a mother's joy; often when caressing him I imagined I saw him grown to manhood, noble in his principles, handsome in appearance, and that he would reward me by his tenderness and duty for all the mental anguish I should have to endure before that time came. When he pressed his little hands on my face, or tried to bite my finger as infants do, I always kissed that sweet little mouth, and sometimes tears followed the kiss and fell upon that face.

On one occasion when I was passing through the corridor, on my way to take my daily promenade, the door of my husband's studio was suddenly thrown open, and the mysterious stranger who had accosted me before in that corridor rushed violently passed me, and disappeared down the marble staircase. The sight of that shrouded form inspired me with a vague foreboding of horror. I had never been able to gather from my husband the object of their frequent visits, and I often attributed his dejection and gloom to his communications with them.

"Who can that man be, Pasiphae? and what can he and his companions want with monsieur?"

"Indeed, my lady, I know not; they come very often I know, and I dislike them much."

"God grant they bring no ill fortune here; but I feel as if contaminated by their vicinage," I devoutly exclaimed, as we stepped from the oriel window out upon the terrace. We did not walk much that day, the wind blew hard; the infant gasped for breath and hid his face on his nurse's shoulder: we went in.

The next day I was occupied in my apartment with my tapestry, when Guilo abruptly entered, without knocking, and with a countenance pale and troubled, requested me to come immediately to his master: he wanted me. Laying aside my embroidery, I left Pasiphae with Raphael, and went. What was my amazement, when entering the banqueting hall, I found it filled with strange men, wearing the uniform of state officers, and seated in their midst, Monsieur de Serval and Count Calabrella; my husband affrighted and shrinking, the count

self-collected and calm as usual. I moved hastily toward my husband, and seated myself at his side; the officers making way for me as I passed them.

"What does this mean, Rinaldo? what do these men want?" I cried, seized with a strange presentiment that their presence in some way related to, or was concerned with the visits of the mysterious strangers.

"Be composed, poor child," replied Rinaldo. "I will tell you; I must leave here, I must go away."

"Leave your castle, go away! Wherefore? for God's sake, explain?" I demanded, perfectly bewildered.

"It is a dreadful thing to tell, but it must be told; I am arrested by these men for high treason; they have come to take me before my sovereign; I am utterly ruined; my castle is no longer mine; I am a bankrupt."

"Oh God!" I exclaimed, as if struck by a sudden blow. I fell down upon my knees, burying my face in my hands.

"It is but too true. I have suffered myself to be engaged in a piratical expedition against the government; it has been discovered, destroyed, and I am commanded to answer the charges laid against me; I am to leave here to day in company with these men."

"Engaged in a piratical expedition against the government; to be arrested; perhaps imprisoned for life; and where are they to take you? cannot I also go?"

"*You* go with me to ignominious disgrace, to a prison's walls; oh no, that cannot be: and yet you cannot stay here. This house will pass into other hands; I know not what to do with you, where to send you. I must return to Naples, but I do not wish you there, amid the general contempt, the disagreeable publicity that will attend me; no, you will be far better off away; I want you to go to Baie; you can remain there until the issue of affairs is known; then, if favorable, you can come to me."

"I will obey you; I will go there if you wish it; but tell me one thing, Rinaldo, I entreat you; are not those singular men who used to visit you, the cause of this?"

"Yes," said he, hesitatingly, "they are."

"I knew it. I felt they came for no good purpose."

"Gentlemen," said my husband, addressing the king's officers, "will you allow me a private conversation with my wife before I go?"

"Certainly, monsieur," replied the principal of the officers; and with their officials they filed slowly from the apartment. The count,

who had not spoken during our dialogue, following them with a dejected air. When the great door of the banqueting hall shut heavily behind them, Rinaldo, as if overcome by this sudden, unlooked for misfortune, threw his arms around me, and, weeping, kissed me.

"Genevra, my poor Genevra, we are about to separate, and it may be you will never see your unhappy husband again! I have not been to you the kind husband I should have been; my conduct has often been harsh and cruel: my love for you has been an enigma to myself. I have not acted rightly towards you; and now, a strange fatality—as unlooked for as strange—is about to tear me from you and that dear child."

Sighing, he kissed me again.

"Let the past be forgotten and forgiven," I answered, as I folded my arms around his neck: "let it go; it is done; it is nothing; I have forgotten it: only let me accompany you now. Why should sorrow separate a wife from a husband? I can share imprisonment with you, and take Raphael with me: I fear not its isolation, nor its gloom."

"No, no; do as I wish. What could be more brutal than to enclose in prison walls a young woman and her child—shut out from God's air and human society! Go to Baie; you will not be far from me; you shall hear from me often. Perhaps this unfortunate affair will be happily ended: then, reunited, we will seek some new home—since this will no longer acknowledge me as master; some sweet, quiet place, where our days shall be spent more happily than the best part of our married life has been."

"But that prospect is far distant; perhaps it may never come; you may be convicted of high treason; oh, heaven! you may be decapitated."

"Well, if that is my fate, I shall meet it bravely: I am not afraid to die, let death come in what shape it will." And he laughed recklessly. "No, Genevra, I fear no such catastrophe; I shall be able to clear myself: tremble not for me."

"How unfortunate this has been; how disastrous for you to have embarked in this ill-omened business. Why did you do it?"

"Talk not of that which is past, Genevra," said he, with something of his former sternness; "but come with me; the officials wait: let us bid each other farewell at the bedside of my child."

He took my hand in his: the officials stationed without the door respectfully made way for us; we ascended to our bedchamber, where, slumbering in his oaken cradle, lay Raphael—his rosy hands

crossed upon his bosom, which rose and fell with his gentle breathing; his long night robe hung without the cradle, and the calm little face, so innocent, so passionless, expressed the unconscious happiness of infancy. A large lamp, the shade depressed, to shield the glare of light from his eyes, sat on a table near; and his nurse sat by the cradle side and watched him—her strongly marked features of dusky hue, and fantastic dress, thrown strongly into relief by the effect of the lamp.

I sent her away, not wishing a witness of this scene; and my husband, kneeling by the cradle, gently took up the child in his arms, but did not awaken him; he still slept on. He looked at the babe long and wistfully: his very soul seemed gushing into his eyes as he contemplated the features of his son. He seemed looking forward into future years; he seemed inspired; he took one of the little hands in his, and kissed it: the child, with a slight start, withdrew it, and recrossed his arms on his bosom.

"Sweet little lamb, as yet innocent of guile, pure as thy Maker: of such, if there is a heaven, should it be composed; sleep on, and mayst thou ever remain as innocent as now."

His thoughts appeared too deep for words; he replaced the babe, laid its satin coverlid over it, and rose on his feet, once more he wistfully regarded it, then turned to me.

"Let us kiss each other; adieu here, Genevra. You had better not come down stairs again; those officials are rude sometimes, and I, being under arrest, cannot protect you against whatever they choose to extend to you. Farewell! you shall hear from me soon; be comforted, you know your religion teaches you that out of much tribulation shall arise joy; be comforted, all is not lost."

But I would not be put off with that abrupt farewell. I went down with him into the lower hall, where, standing around on the marble floor, in various attitudes, were the king's functionaries. Count Calabrella had offered large sums of money to the chief, making himself responsible for Monsieur de Serval's appearance for his trial in any state they should name, but the men were inexorable. Their commands from government were to bring him in person to Naples. No influence, no money could shield him. The count was traversing the hall with hasty strides, and gloomy expression of countenance, his steps resounding as he walked; seeing me approach on Rinaldo's arm, on which I leant heavily, he came towards us, endeavoring to conceal his uneasiness by a forced smile.

"This is a most singular affair. How came Alcantara to be detected?" he inquired, speaking in a low tone.

"The stupid fool had the impudence to boast of what we were doing in the coffee houses, some persons informed the government, which led to my exposure."

"I have been trying to persuade them to return alone, naming some day for your appearance, promising to come with you myself, but they will not consent,—what is to be done, my friend?" he anxiously inquired, looking sorrowfully at Rinaldo.

"What is to be done? why I am to go, of course, my dear Alfieri. Don't be annoyed, don't be alarmed at this: you know I told you weeks ago I was prepared for the worst: all that troubles me is the welfare of my wife and child. This old castle, though partly ruinous, is still a home, but even this I am obliged to part with. I sold it some days ago to a friend, to raise money for this expedition; and that is also gone. She and the infant must leave here; I wish you to attend her to Baie, where she will be not far from Naples, and can hear from me often. Promise me to see her safely there to-morrow."

"I will do all that mortal man can do for Madame de Serval, you may be sure; whatever she wishes I will perform," said the count, with fervor.

"Thank the fates, then, I do not leave them friendless,—utterly uncared for," ejaculated Rinaldo.

The chief of the officers now came out of the banqueting hall, and whispered to my husband.

"Very well," said he in reply, "in an hour I shall be ready, if you wish it, to start."

"In an hour! are you going in an hour?" I cried. "Oh cannot they stay till to-morrow? do make them stay till then."

"To-morrow, child, to-morrow I shall be far away from you."

We three continued to walk up and down: I tearful, desponding; the count abstracted, silent; Rinaldo with a sort of affected reckless gayety, assumed, doubtless, to conceal his real feelings. The men were sent away into the servants' hall, and what little luggage my husband was allowed to take with him, brought down. I imagined I had a world of things to say in that hour, yet, when I went to speak, they escaped my recollection. I could think of nothing but the suddenness of this separation, and my own sad situation. The hour elapsed, it fled,—the man came to summon Rinaldo, the carriage was ready, the luggage was placed behind, the officers got into their carriages, the chief came to escort my husband to his

"I regret extremely that it should be my misfortune to convey such disagreeable tidings, and to be the cause of bringing sorrow to such a lady," said the man, politely raising his cap to me.

"It is not your fault; we excuse you; you merely act officially. If the carriage is ready, I am. Proceed, sir."

I walked with him to the court yard, notwithstanding he cautioned me not to do so, saying I would catch cold. Four carriages contained the inferior men, and their principal occupied the same carriage with my husband. He did not kiss me farewell there before others, but relinquishing my hand with stoical energy, he entered it with his companion, and closed the door. He shook hands convulsively with the count, who went round to the carriage window to bid him adieu. I did not move; I was riveted to the spot where I stood. The carriage started, it whirled through the avenue, it passed the lodge, it was gone, the others following it. When my eyes could no longer discern any traces of it; when I was fully convinced that it was reality, no dream, but reality, stern reality; I turned within the hall, went up stairs, fell upon my knees by the child's bedside, laid my cheek by his, and wept bitterly.

CHAPTER XI.

Reason almost failed me, when I awoke the next day. I wandered into the banqueting hall, calling for Rinaldo. The count followed me, entreated me to recollect myself, to bear misfortunes with calmness, with fortitude; asked what he could do for me. I answered not: I began to doubt my own identity. I only remembered distinctly that I was to leave that day, to go to Baie: every thing else seemed blank, intangible.

I summoned Guilo to my salon, and told him that the castle was sold by my husband to another, who would come in a few days to claim it. I offered to pay his expenses to any city he chose to go, or he might stay in the vicinity of the castle, and endeavor to obtain employment of the new owner. He thanked me for my kindness to him, and said he preferred remaining. The other domestics were sent away; my household was broken up. Pasiphae determined to

accompany my precarious fortunes as the nurse of Raphael, and so all things being definitely arranged, Count Calabrella, myself, Pasiphae, and my beloved babe, started that afternoon for Baie. I, almost unconscious, allowed myself to be placed in the barouche, and without looking back at those proud turrets and massive walls, within whose confines I had passed two years of alternate joy and grief, I was borne away. We rode all day. The count, anxious to beguile me from sad thoughts, conversed charmingly, but though ever agreeable and fascinating, yet my mind was too pre-occupied to listen, and the object so kindly intended failed of its purpose; nor did my melancholy abstraction cease, when, on the second day of our travel, we entered Baie.

Oh, Baie! classic, beautiful, time-honored Baie! when again shall I revisit thy tranquil, lovely shores? when again shall I gaze upon thy pellucid waters, or roam over thy gentle, verdant hills, once the home of happy thousands,—thrilling with life, hope, perhaps happiness,—now silent, deserted; the seat of ruins, the abode of solitary peasants, who lead their flocks over the spot where once rose stately Roman villas, temples, theatres, and all the haunts of what *was* human vanity and life;—all which have faded into fragments, into dust, leaving those few remains to tell that the tide of human life had once passed there.

"Why am I not also gone?" thought I despondingly, as the barouche rolled over the smooth road, among the ruins. "Why do I still live on, unfortunate, unhappy? my husband arrested for high treason; myself and child alone and desolate; our home lost to us forever! What has the future for me but disappointment, continued isolation and my child, my Raphael! what is to become of him?"

The stopping of the carriage aroused me from my gloomy reflections. It paused at a small cottage kept as a place of accommodation for strangers. Tired, faint, and weary, I found myself in the parlor of this rustic abode, scarce knowing where I was. The apartments were comfortable and scrupulously clean, but in contrast to the elegant home I had just left, they appeared contemptible to me. An image of the virgin stood in one corner, under it a crucifix: some pictures decorated the plastered walls, and flowers were trained to creep outside the latticed windows;—a gaily colored parrot, in a gilded cage, mockingly imitated our words, repeating them after us in playful tones: the hostess, a peasant vinter's wife, came courtesying in to receive us, wearing a Neapolitan dress, which reminded me forcibly of Naples. The domestics of the castle, wearing another style, embarrassed and awkward at the sight of one, so far superior in worldly station. Ah!

how far happier, if they did but know it, are those lowly ones of earth! how quiet; how untinctured by ambition are their lives! Very little envy is theirs; very little of those fierce hatreds we see in society! Calm, peaceful, obscure, they walk to their graves, seldom known; seldom wishing to be known, yet often tasting much real, substantial happiness.

The count explained that I wished apartments for myself, nurse, and child, and the woman left the room to prepare them.

"And you, my friend," I said to him, "you also are going to stay here?"

"Until to-morrow I shall have that honor," said he, "but after that I shall not have the pleasure of being near you."

"Oh!" I cried, "will you also desert me? shall I be utterly alone?"

"Alone! oh, no! not all alone with the companionship of your own sweet thoughts and your lovely child. Do not grieve; to meet to separate is the inevitable law of nature. Why should we cavil at that we cannot change? Existence is, as I have often told you, a play, a farce;—do not let us be its most miserable actors. Your husband will doubtless be liberated soon. You will be restored to him;—life will put forth new buds and blossoms from its giant tree. In his renewed affection you will find new joys; and I shall pursue my solitary travels, rejoicing at your happiness."

"But if you were not there, the measure of our joy would be incomplete. If what you predict comes to pass, will not you partake of our joy?"

"I! what shall I be to you but a strange dream, associated with unhappy circumstances, disagreeable to your memory? I shall have been but the witnesser of one of those vicissitudes of fortune, which always fall to the lot of the talented and beautiful. No! I had better be forgotten. To be forgotten! how mortifying is the reflection. Yet, has it not always been the law of destiny?"

"Do not philosophize now; let us be matter of fact. I thought, when my husband was so cruelly taken away, that you, who have always been so kind, would be spared me—at least for some time—till I should recover a little from this violent shock; but I am disappointed in this, as in all other things."

"Lady," said he, bending a piercing glance upon me from his expressive eyes, "the request you make would be as dangerous to myself (if granted), as it would be useless to you. The charms of your person, your judgment and talent, I appreciate to their fullest extent, and nothing could give me more delight than to revel in the sunshine of

such presence; but that enjoyment would be as injurious to you as perfidious in me to my friend."

The sad tones of his voice and significant manner of expression, did not allow me to misunderstand him. In my careless innocence I never recollected the cruel interpretation malice would put upon such companionship.

"My departure," he continued, "will be all the more advantageous to you, since to-morrow I will proceed immediatey to Naples, and perhaps, through intercession with his Majesty, be the means of liberating your husband. I shall, of course, see him immediately, wherever he is, and write you a description of affairs."

He became silent, and mechanically stroked my infant's rosy, downy cheeks. The vinter's wife came tripping into the room, saying she would attend me to the apartments. Pasiphae, sad and quiet, preceded me, carrying Raphael; the count remained absorbed in thought. The rustic stairs were climbed, and with many low courtesies I was ushered into a large chamber, in which I noticed nothing but an immense fauteuil, into which I sank mechanically, completely overpowered. After making numerous demonstrations of respect and duty, the hostess withdrew.

In the meantime, Raphael, who had slept nearly all the way from the Chateau of the Ravine, awoke from the slumber in which he had been wrapt all day, and looked inquiringly for me. I took him in my arms and kissed him. The little one laid his tiny hands on my face and raised his large eyes wistfully to mine. He was too young to miss his father, or know that father's fate,—that unhappy, wayward man who now inhabited, perhaps, a prison's gloom: and as I childishly toyed with the ribbons of his dress and watched the light and play of his features, I wished—oh! what does not a mother wish?

I did not go down stairs again that afternoon and evening; but I distinctly heard the footsteps of the count as he continued to pace the floor of the lower room till a late hour. My own heart was the prey of contending emotions—of conflicting thoughts. Raphael fell asleep on my breast—his tiny hand clasped in mine—with an expression of conscious happiness on his smiling countenance. I fixed my gaze upon a crucifix which hung in a corner, and invoked to my support that invisible influence whom we worship in an earthly form. I conjured up before me visions of persecuted martyrs, dying saints, nuns devoted alone to the service of God; but, in spite of myself, other thoughts came stealing over me, and the recollections of the happy days of love

and sunshine I had passed during the first part of my married life, were mingled with regrets at my husband's misfortunes.

A glorious morning sun beaming through the lattice, awoke me at an early hour; a beautiful landscape met my eyes on going to the window; it commanded a view of the sea coast, which was not far distant; and I beheld with delight the blue rolling waves of the ocean, crested with foam, and swelling proudly as they rolled onward, and came and beat against the rocks on the shore, with a hoarse echoing sound; the high cliffs at the water's edge, matted into quiet unassuming hills as they disappeared in the distance. The light fishing skiffs of the fishermen, chained to the shore, danced on the bosom of the blue waters, and the joyous song of the men as they drew in their nets, was wafted to my ears by the clear morning breeze. The shepherds and their flocks browsing on the hill tops, diminished by distance to the size of mice, were dimly visible. On that classic, quiet shore, silence and repose kept vigils gentle and imposing as such presence should be.

When I descended I found the count below in the parlor; he said his sleep had been disturbed by dismal dreams, and his sad face bore testimony to his words. After breakfast, at which little was said, he proposed a walk on the beach; mechanically I consented, put on my bonnet and shawl, and we went forth together.

We pursued a path through a small forest of palm, linden, and fir trees; their thick shade formed an impenetrable bower, relieved at their base by wild flowers of every description; the meandering course of numerous rivulets ran through the wood.

We continued on, the count occasionally making some remark about the beauty of the scenery, to which I responded by monosyllables; my mind was too intensely absorbed to talk. The forest was passed: the sun broke brightly from a cloud, and the beach and the murmuring waves lay before us; a small schooner, contending against the tide, was drifting slowly along.

"That bark, struggling for anchorage, is like your life, dear lady; now it rises, now falls amid the waters; the sails gathered in, the pilot endeavoring to gain a position of safety; presently she will rest quietly, securely anchored on the bosom of the bay; so will it be, I predicate, of thee."

"God grant it may," I murmured.

As he said, after many tacts and manœuvres, the little bark succeeded in gaining safe anchorage, where riding tranquilly it rested. The birds of the ocean surrounded it, flapping their wings, and making the air resound with their mournful cries.

A road wound along the shore, bordered by a footpath: on this we wandered at random, stooping sometimes to pick the flowers strewing the way. The count philosophized on nature in his sweet voice, and nature smiled upon us wearing her fairest dress; at last, after we had gone some distance, he looked at his watch.

"The hour has come, dear lady, I must go: the carriage will be at the house to bear me away, and your forebodings will be relieved when I shall arrive at Naples and write you."

Seeing that he was really bent on going, we retraced our steps to the house; the barouche which brought us was already there; he did not enter the dwelling, but pressing my hand with earnest fervor, stepped into it and drove away.

* * * * * * *

A week of quiet daily routine, and intense mental anxiety, succeeded the count's departure; the days sped slowly in monotonous regularity; the nights were lonely, and would have been terrible had it not been for my child and faithful servant.

The evening of the sixth day after he went to Naples, I was sitting at the window of my room abstractedly gazing on vacancy, when I saw a man rapidly approaching on horseback, urging his spurs into the animal's sides, and moving his arms in such a ridiculous manner, that, had my mind been at ease, I should have laughed at his absurd gestures; but in my grief they were unnoticed; suddenly reining in his horse at the door, he handed a letter to the peasant, who was taking his siesta before the door, and rode away as rapidly as he had come; the man brought it to me, and I eagerly, yet tremblingly, opened it and devoured the contents; it was from my husband, superscribed in the count's handwriting, and as follows:

"*Barberinni Prison, June 11th.*

"DEAREST GENEVRA:—

"Count Calabrella will find means to send you this. Were it not for him you would hear nothing of my condition, as I am under such close surveillance that nothing concerning me escapes suspicion. The principal agent in this sad affair exposed all by his blunders, and this has brought me, perhaps, to a felon's death. It is not known when my trial will take place,—I hope soon, as I have secured powerful mediation in my behalf. These prisons are dark and cold—frightful from their solitude. I sit in one corner of my cell and write this by the light of a lantern, while the count waits to take it away. I wish I could see my boy again; but the strange inexorable fate which

has pursued me from my earliest years will probably continue its malice to the close of my life. Farewell,—farewell,—take care of yourself,—remain at Bain till the result of this is known. You shall hear from me soon again.

"Yours till death, SERVAL."

This strange epistle, written on a piece of paper evidently torn from some book, and almost illegible from blots and blurs, was too general and incoherent to satisfy me. Perhaps, for fear of being surprised by the jailor or some of the officials, he was unable to write more; yet he told me of nothing that had transpired. Perhaps it would have harrowed my heart too much had he told me all,—he wished to spare me the sorrow.

Then came a note, within the other, from Count Calabrella.

"MOST RESPECTED LADY:—

"Immediately upon my arrival I asked permission to be admitted to see your husband, but was refused the favor, and only obtained it yesterday through the intercession of a cardinal of the church, a friend of mine. I then hastened to see Monsieur de Serval. I found him sad, but not as desponding as I had expected. Of course you can imagine what was said of you,—and I should be rude to repeat to you what you will have already anticipated. We then conversed upon this ill-fated affair. I told him that Alcantara was arrested, of which fact he was ignorant,—the minor confederates had fled. We conferred as to what was best to be done; and I decided on soliciting the intercession of the foreign ministers, and some of the cardinals, together with as many others as I could secure.

"When I left him I hastened to the house of the French minister. I was admitted to an audience. He received me most politely,—listened attentively to my explanation of the facts of the case, (which it is needless to trouble you with,)—I entreated him to interest himself for his countryman. He did not definitely say he would, but deferred the question for reconsideration. I think, however, I shall be able to persuade him into doing something. I have secured the interests of several cardinals, and intend to do much more before the trial comes on. Believe me, every thing that is within the range of human possibility shall be done. I do not despair: and I entreat you, also, to be consoled,—to hope.

"Yours in faith, CALABRELLA."

This letter partially revived my drooping spirits, for it breathed hope and elasticity of mind. My husband's was gloomy, but that was attributable to his unhappy situation. I had expected an explanation, —I received only general assurances of brighter times, which to me seemed far distant,—dubious,—if not impossible.

I resigned myself to the course of circumstances, and patiently abided my time. Beautiful sunny days, and moonlight nights, fell upon Baie at that time,—the warm, bright glow of the sun, and the calm sweet light of the moon was soothing as its rays. I often walked, beneath its light, up and down the road on which the house faced.

One evening I started before sunset and walked in the direction of some curious ruins, situated on a cliff on the shores; the road diverged in a fork leading down to the beach. I preferred this walk and followed it; when I had walked some distance I reached the beach, the waters now quietly swelling and falling beneath the brilliant rays of the sun; the road was thickly strewn with shells, some of which I picked up and examined; then, my mind naturally running back to philosophy, I compared human life, human joys, human expectations, to those shells at my feet, and those ruins on the cliff before me. As the light played upon the broken archway, the desolate courtyard, the ruined chambers, the falling turrets, I felt my old feelings of gloom and morbid thought come wandering back.

I ascended the hill by a beaten pathway, and wandered in and around the little temple; myself and my thoughts were the only inhabitants of the place. I gathered a bouquet of flowers and was preparing to return, the moon having now arisen: when, glancing up at the sky, I saw that which had been a few moments before so serene, dark and lowering; the horizon obscured by immense black clouds, which were rapidly spreading over the sky; heavy gusts were borne bellowing along, and the glaring foam of the waves was visible far away.

It was impossible to take the beach road under such circumstances, the tide having arisen, I was in danger of drowning; it was impossible to go through the woods the other side of the ruins, I was in danger of being lost in their density. I knew not what to do: meanwhile the sky continued to darken; the moon was completely overcast; the wind continued to howl around me; the only thing to do was to remain in the temple, and claim the precarious benefit of its shelter. I could scarcely see to re-enter the ruins, and seated myself on a broken column in their midst; everything was buried in stones and darkness; the gloom was so intense I felt it.

The storm increased rapidly; the waves lashed to fury, broke against

the rocks with a roaring noise; the waves in the distance shone with phosphoric light; the clouds swept hither and thither over the face of the sky; now in tremendous masses, now scattered, white, dim and ghostlike; such a scene as this, was calculated to inspire any one with horror, and the blood ran cold in my veins, as I sat and listened.

Thus it raged for I know not how long: I could not reckon time in such a place. I thought it must be two hours. Then another sound was mingled with the gale: a strange crashing, a wild unearthly yell rang out on the storm; then all was absorbed in the rushing gale. Presently another interval of calm succeeded to the hellish sounds, when the waves and winds apparently paused to take breath, and gather their strength for another onset. The uproar of echoes, reverberating around me, was frightful; I almost thought demons from a lower world were playing their fantastic tricks within the old ruins. The weather during the day had been delightful, but the storm had rendered the air severe; and, as I sat shivering on the column, my hair standing on end, and teeth chattering with fear, the moon momentarily broke through the clouds, and disclosed the lurid landscape, strange and unearthly looking by the mysterious light. I could not express on paper the agony I suffered, till by the faint streaks of morning light in the east, I perceived day would soon dawn. The roar of the gale gradually subsided, the clouds became less strongly dark, the ocean's waves less tumultuous; and an hour afterward, when I could fully perceive objects, I saw the light of day; and it shone upon a strange scene! When assured that the danger was over, I summoned strength to rise; my trembling limbs almost refused to support me. I wished to return to the house, anxious about my child. Walking down the hill towards the beach, my attention was attracted by pieces of spars, rigging, and a small boat stranded by the waves; this explained to me the horrid sound I had heard during the storm. A ship had been wrecked off the coast, which in that part abounded in breakers; numerous other objects now caught my astonished eyes: a little farther on a number of bales and some personal property lay scattered about; an object clothed in white, was stretched across my way; going towards it I knelt down and sought to distinguish what it was; it was a corpse, a female form; the drapery concealed the face. I raised the robe from the countenance, and beheld! yes,—no,—yes—it *was* Blanche!

Blanche! Great heaven! what could it mean? Yes, it was her! There she was dead: the same calm, sweet features; the same graceful form, dressed in white; the fair arms crossed on the breast. From the position in which I found her, she seemed not to have made the

slightest effort to save herself: the angels of heaven seemed to have fanned her with their wings,—so innocently calm, so pure looked she. But how came she on board this unhappy bark? Where was she going to? I had supposed that when she fled from Naples, it was to some foreign land, not to remain in Italy. And where was her lover? I resolved to leave the body, and go to some fishermen's huts on the cliff behind the ruin, and seek assistance, to have the body conveyed to town. As I prepared to do so, several other bodies presented themselves to my gaze, and in the corpse of a man, lying with his face exposed, I recognized Lord Glenfell. He was dressed in royal blue cloth, such as he had always worn (preserving his English customs) at Naples. One hand was buried in his bosom, the other hung stiff and cold by his side; and even in death he retained his perfect beauty. This unexpected, incomprehensible event, coming so suddenly upon me, after my own sorrows, and the fright from the storm, overpowered me, and sitting down on a fragment of stone, I wept over the bodies. Along the beach for a quarter of a mile the wreck was strewed in confusion: masts, cargo, rigging, luggage, all lay in different positions. The principal part of the passengers and crew probably had perished. One or two bodies came floating along as I frantically rushed up the hill again, in the direction of the fisher's huts. They were not there when I reached them:—gone, an old woman told me, to plunder the wreck. She and a young girl were the only occupants of the tent, and I earnestly entreated them to return with me to the shore, and carry the body of Blanche to their house, to remain there till I could obtain assistance from Baie. They consented to accompany me, and we returned together, they talking incessantly about the storm and the wreck, wondering what the name of the vessel was, and whence it came. The bodies were undisturbed when I reached them. The woman, apparently used to such scenes, carelessly took up the inanimate form of my beloved friend, and strode away to the house again, while the girl remained to watch that of Lord Glenfell's.

Meanwhile the sun had fully risen, and threw his golden rays on the scene. The waves had subsided somewhat: they were growing calmer. The sky was bright and glowing: the hues of morning lit up the shores.

The wreckers were busy at their plunder, wretchedly dressed; some of them in tatters, running here and there: even the dead bodies they spared not. The girl sat down on the sand near the gurgling waves, and I, standing on my feet, regarded the fair young Englishman. His eyes, which in life had been a soft brilliant blue, were wide open, and

their unnatural glare startled me. The deadly palor of his features, and the languid air his form and face bore, too surely showed that life was not there. Presently the old woman returned, and with the aid of her husband, an athletic peasant, they raised the corpse, and I and the girl following, went back whence we came.

They laid the two beautiful, yet guilty lovers, side by side on a rustic bed, poor and lowly as the lot of them to whom it belonged. Then the woman began to wash away the sand which thickly obscured their faces, and gathered on their clothes, all the while uttering sad cries that two so beautiful should die. Wiping the tears from my eyes, I turned to the peasant, and asked him if he could proceed immediately to my house at Baie, and procure biers to take the bodies thither, and tell my maid and some of the peasants there to come also? He replied with alacrity that he would, and departed.

When the sand and red clay of the shore was entirely cleared from their persons, I regarded the corpses more attentively. Two years had not changed my Blanche; she was as beautiful as in those times past, when we sang together at Naples. I remembered the night of her departure, and her nocturnal farewell—so sad, so strange. Where had she gone then, and whither was she going now in this ship? Perhaps again to Parthenope, when the scissors of the fatal sisters, cut short the thread of her days. Oh! unhappy fate,—sad destiny.

Lord Glenfells then continued faithful to his vows of faith and love. Oh! marvellous instance of attachment in a man, that his love should last two years. Perhaps, if there were more women like her, their love would last longer. Together they had died, and now it was my sad task to see them buried amid the wild, romantic scenery of Baie.

I was alone with the bodies for more than an hour, ere the peasant came back with my poor, astonished Pasiphae, accompanied by several men, bearing hand biers. News of the shipwreck had reached the town, and great fear had been entertained lest some evil had befallen me, as hour after hour passed away, and I came not, and the terrible storm arose. Great was their amazement when they beheld me watching two corpses, and when they saw the agony imprinted on my face. The sympathizing Pasiphae threw herself at my feet, and weepingly buried her face in the folds of my robe.

"This is a most inexplicable affair, my poor Pasiphae," said I. "I will tell you some other time. I could not return to you last evening. I spent the night in the ruins of the temple to avoid the storm. I wish to get home quickly."

"The sweet child wept much last night, my lady, but I hushed him to sleep at last," said my faithful servant.

I turned to the men, who had placed upon the bier Lord Glenfells and his beautiful Blanche, and after paying the women for their attention, the mournful cortege set out.

We took the road along the beach to the fork, whence it diverged to the house; then following that, we soon arrived at home. The women came rushing to the door to see so strange a sight, and scarce believed their eyes when they beheld what I brought. They were carried up stairs into an empty room, next to mine, placed on a bed, covered with a white coverlid; and I left the room, locking the door and taking the key with me. I returned to my child.

* * * * * * *

I buried them at Baie. They have a lonely grave on that rock-bound coast, at the top of the cliff on which the ruined temple of fortune stands. The ocean's waves wash the base of the rocks, and the flowers and trees are gathered thickly around it. No splendid monument marks the last repose of one of England's brightest, handsomest sons;—no inscription tells of the fair, ill-fated songstress. Her death, like her life, was isolated. But her memory at least is still fondly cherished by one who knew and loved her well.

When last I visited their graves, I found them overgrown with flowers,—odorous and beautiful as had been the character of Blanche. There the rose, the acacia, japonica, myrtle, and cypress, form unfading bowers, unfailing mourners, over their graves. When the sea is calm, the quiet murmur of its waves seems to utter unknown regrets. In storms their swelling tumult sounds like a requiem. Vain would it be for me to describe the many sad hours I passed there, silently offering as an ovation the grief of a sincere heart. During my stay at Baie, not a day elapsed but found me a visiter there. There the sadness of the scene taught me to moderate my own regrets,—taught me to uplift my heart to God,—taught me to be humble, thankful, and resigned.

A month passed without my hearing anything farther from my husband or Count Calabrella. I was terribly anxious: I dreaded lest something of a frightful character had happened, and that they feared to tell me it. I sometimes walked half the night up and down my room, conjuring my brains to imagine the reasons of this mysterious silence; but I could bring my mind to no clear explanation. I could resolve on nothing; everything was dark to me. At length the dreaded, yet wished for explanation came. Another courier came

with another letter, which I have still preserved. I submit it to you:—

"I have made my escape. I have left Naples and Italy for ever. Had I awaited my trial, I know I should have been utterly lost. I jeoparded my life in getting out of prison; but am safe now. I release you from all faith, all allegiance to me; forget me: heaven never intended us for each other. Return to the gay world: may you be happy. Kiss my child for me. I had a presentiment, when I stood over his cradle, that I should never see him more: his baby-features are imprinted on my soul; they will only be obliterated when I shall cease to breathe. Remember me in those prayers you so fervently offer to your God, and may that God watch over you.

"I go to seek a new fortune in some foreign land; as yet I know not where: everything in the future is dark and uncertain. Farewell! Farewell! SERVAL."

When I had read this strange epistle, and fully comprehended it, I remained petrified with amazement: the tone of it was so reckless, wild—almost incoherent—I scarcely believed it to be my husband's. He gave me up; he told me to forget him; to return to the world I had quitted for him. He seemed to write without feeling any regret, any sadness at this eternal separation. His child alone elicited a sentiment of humanity; and this was all the reward I received for the forbearance I had manifested toward him,—the devotion I had practiced for more than two years to that unhappy man. I was thrown off—cast away!

After reflection, I resolved to go to Naples to learn something definite. Our travelling arrangements were soon made, and the following afternoon we left Baie.

The classic ruins, the ocean, the beautiful shore, and the graves of Blanche and Lord Glenfells, were soon lost to my longing eyes, in the windings of the road. The town, the mountains, sea, rivulets, ruins and all, were enveloped in the blue mists of heaven.

The next day I again beheld the fair city of Naples rising on the hill, with her lofty towers, gardens, churches, castles and splendid private dwellings, rearing their superb height one above the other; and again I drove through the beautiful street Toledo. I hastened to the house of Madame Bonni; but two years had created changes in Naples. The good woman was gone, and another dwelt in her house. I secured apartments, however, in one of the most retired hotels, and then sent for the Court Guide, to acertain the residence of Count Calabrella, whom I regarded as my only friend in this great trouble; it

was brought, and after ascertaining his address, I sent mine to him.

He came immediately. When he entered my parlour I rushed toward him, and showing him the letter I held in my hand, exclaimed:

"Is this true? Oh! tell me, dear count, is it true?"

"Be calm, dear lady, I entreat you; be composed; this is an unexpected meeting. I had intended coming to you at Baie to-morrow to tell you the strange news."

"But tell me, I entreat you, is it true? has my husband really escaped from prison? has he left me in this way?"

"He has escaped, and gone I know not where. Three days ago I visited him to tell him some favorable news regarding himself; he seemed cheerful; spoke much of you, and confidently of the result of the trial. Yesterday it was noised abroad that he had fled from Naples; doubting whether it was not mere rumor, I inquired, and found it true: it astonished me much. Knowing your husband's determined character, I had been actively engaged in obtaining all the influence I could in his favor. I doubt not, myself, had he awaited his trial, it would have terminated favorably."

"Gone! gone!" I cried—thinking only of the desertion—"for ever gone! and what is to become of me and the child?"

"Don't give way to grief, madame; be comforted; you will find numerous friends: those who have known and loved you before your marriage."

"Oh, count! I feel as if this were the acme of my misfortunes!"

"I know life has had many changes for you; but sorrow will not last for ever; and destiny sometimes presents a pleasant face."

Thus for an hour he endeavored to divert my mind from dwelling with too much intensity on this inexplicable affair; but in vain did I try to talk or think of something else; and he, perceiving the abstraction of my thoughts, probably thought that quiet and repose would be the best consolers at that moment: and, after repeated adjurations to be calm, to hope, he went away. I appreciated the delicacy of his behavior in not reverting to any thing that could pain me: he had impressed me agreeably at first, and acquaintance had not dissipated that impression. I was determined, however, to learn more concerning my husband; and that day calling a calesso, bade him drive to the Barberinni prison. It was situated in an obscure quarter of the city, down near the harbor, surrounded by dark and dirty looking buildings on all sides, and itself presenting an appearance of dark, impenetrable gloom. I alighted and entered the keeper's room, where

he sat, amid old papers of all descriptions, reading from a great book, which looked to me like a leger. Great bunches of keys adorned the smoked walls, dirty and old as their proprietor; and an old writing-desk stood in one corner, with a high stool before it.

He rose civilly as I entered, and asked in what he could please me. I told him that I had come to ask the particulars of my husband's escape; and then informed him that I was the wife of Monsieur de Serval. He seemed surprised at that; and, on my requesting to be shown my husband's cell, immediately acquiesced, locking the door of his stronghold previous to accompanying me.

We threaded several long stone galleries, off which, on either side, opened the doors of the cells. Then we descended a long flight of stairs; then came another gallery; then he paused, and unlocked an iron door, and ushered me into the dreary cell, lighted by one window, in which Rinaldo had written me the letter I received at Baie. One of the iron bars of the window was gone; the keeper pointed to it, and said: "Through that aperture your husband made his escape two nights ago. I know not how he obtained possession of the file with which he sawed apart the bar; but he did so, and swam probably to the opposite shore: at any rate, nothing has been learned of him, though government has sent spies every where to look for him." I looked down at the stone pavement at my feet—and up at the dim light above my head—and soliloquized, that a month in a dungeon like that must be equivalent to ten years in the world.

"Did no one come to see my husband during his imprisonment?" I asked, wishing to learn if any one besides Count Calabrella had visited him.

"A tall, dark gentleman came often, and once another man came, but he wore a cloak, and I could not see his face; as he presented a permit, I admitted him."

"That must have been the man who was accessary to his departure," thought I: and having nothing farther to say to the keeper, I left the cell and returned to the carriage, and was driven home to the hotel.

All the inquiries I made were baffled; all my suppositions were useless; nothing further concerning my husband's dubious fate was learned. I found myself ouce more thrown out on the world, obliged to resort to my musical talents for a support. The old manager of the San Carlo, hearing I wished to return to the stage, called on me, and I entered into an engagement with him to perform in one of my old operas. I cannot describe the heartaches I experienced at being obliged to resume the laborious and distasteful profession I had so

gladly resigned: but something must be done;—I could not remain idle;—I knew of no other means by which I could maintain myself as well as by singing, and therefore decided on that.

The night of my reappearance, a crowded house awaited me: and the Austrian nightingale, in her misfortunes, was more admired than had been the gay Genevra; yet could those brilliant crowds have looked into my heart, and have seen the bitter sadness imprinted there, even my rivals would have pitied me; but the world only beheld the celebrated beauty, the great singer, and my rivals could see nothing; their envy blinded them. My only joy was to return from those crowded houses; to run away from the plaudits of the multitude, the dubious admiration of the men, the patronizing envy of the women, and bury myself in the solitude of my own room; devote myself to my smiling, happy boy. It was generally understood that I denied myself to all visitors, consequently I was not annoyed by any of those disagreeable attentions so often extended to actresses. I even wished to deny myself to the count, dreading the consequences of such companionship; but gratitude forbade such incivility, and he came.

One evening Raphael had fallen asleep on a sofa, after creeping about on the floor till sleep overcame him. His pretty mouth, like a blooming rose-bud, was half open, showing two new teeth, and his long white robe swept along the sofa as he lay;—as I sat near him, listening to his gentle breathing, I heard a light step on the carpet, and turning, saw the count. He sat down on the sofa, at the feet of Raphael, and looking at him, said:

"How sweetly he slumbers; how innocent is the sleep of a child."

"Yes, their unsuspicious innocence is a charming attribute which they soon lose."

I never could raise my eyes when the count was present without encountering his fixed gaze, and I met it now as I looked up from my child. He turned his away as I did so, and turned his hat from one hand to the other with a confused air.

"Can nothing be thought of? can nothing be done, to find out something more about Monsieur de Serval?" I suddenly inquired, reminded more strongly by the presence of the count of my unhappy lord.

"Everything that the ingenuity of the government could devise, or I, or others, suggest to find him out, has been done, but in vain. He has baffled pursuit. Perhaps some day in future will find you reunited to him on some fair isle, of which you and your child will form the Venus and Cupid, your husband the Mars: then, in those days of

sunshine, all recollections of unhappy hours will be forgotten: that will be another sphere of existence."

"It is very kind of you to re-assure me, but I am convinced that will never be."

"It is possible, and whatever is possible is probable; as for me, he continued, I wonder what fate has in store for me; a life of loneliness I suppose, as it always has been, travelling, wandering alone."

"Oh, say not so," I cried, and anxious to soothe, I laid my hand on his; "not if you were near me, should you be lonely; friend to me and my husband, I would always cheer you."

"You," he exclaimed, catching my hand; "oh, heaven itself would seem to dawn upon me, could I always be near you as I am now." Then, as if amazed at the fervor with which he had spoken, he dropped my hand, and confusedly looked down. An agitated silence followed: this singular avowal had been so abrupt, it startled me into a tumult of thoughts I had not dreamed of for a long time past: my cheeks blushed carnation hues as I looked away; my confusion, however, did not last long, for the count, as if struggling against some feeling he wished to hide, rose abruptly, and ejaculated, as if with an effort,

"I have alarmed you; I have acted foolishly; but God knows it was involuntary; I did not intend to wound your feelings; forgive me, dear Lady Genevra, forgive me; good night." He extended his small, thin hand for mine; with my head averted, I placed mine within his. He shook it gently, and when I looked up he was gone. Oh, how fervently I wished I had a right ever to retain that hand, ever to lean on that arm, and gaze into those star-lit eyes; to feel that some one human being on earth cared for me, was true to me, would not desert me or disdain my love. Oh, how I wished for that faithful heart. And then to think I had found it, but under such circumstances that it was guilt itself to think of it! Had I not better determine never to see him again, to deny myself the siren-like attraction which was drawing me I know not where? Ought I not to think of my husband, to mourn his loss, regret his destiny? Yet he had himself bade me forget him, abandon all allegiance to him, be happy without him. What was to become of me? whither should I turn for consolation? Monsieur Belmont had gone to Paris, to direct the opera there; Madame Bonni had left the city; sweet Blanche was dead, and Inez far away. Oppressed with these thoughts, I sank into a reverie, when my child stirred, and turning, I took him in my arms.

CHAPTER XII.

In my loneliness I reminded me of the words of the superior of the convent of Sacre Cœur, and resolved to visit her. The same nun admitted me, and I again found myself in the little convent parlor.

Presently I heard the rustling silk dress, and the superior stood before me. Her features bore the same calm expression of severity; her manner the same impressive solemnity. She immediately recognised me, and pressing my hand, almost cordially said,

"Well, daughter, I see you again; you have remembered me; and how fares the world with thee? has not its hollow-heartednesss already tired you?"

"I feel tired of it sometimes, mother, and remembering the invitation to visit you, which you gave me two years age, I have come."

"You have done rightly, daughter: I am glad to see you. I think you told me you were a catholic; I hope you still remain faithful to our blessed faith?"

"It has often been a consolation to me in much trouble."

I was about to enter into more general conversation, when other visitors came, and I took leave, the Superior cordially bidding me adieu, and inviting me to come to mass in the chapelle of the Sisters.

Thinking upon the solitude of a convent life—the austerity of such an existence—I sought my room, where I found the count playing with Raphael's baby-rattle to amuse him. He came toward me, as if doubtful of his reception after the incident of our last meeting; but forgetting the slight peak I then felt—thinking only of the happiness of seeing him—I smild and extended my hand.

"You see I have been endeavoring to amuse little Raphael during your absence.

"For which I am very much obliged;" and not knowing what to say—for his presence, of late, always embarrassed me—I sat down on the sofa, and as the infant began to cry, told Pasiphae to take it away, which she did, and we were left alone. I turned, momentarily, to look from the window on the busy street: an audible sigh fell on my ear, when I turned round, the count was at my feet.

"Genevra! Let me call you by that name," said he. "Why should I seek to conceal a passion which I know you must have already discovered? why should I hesitate to declare that, of all the women I

have ever seen in all the lands I have ever been, I single you out as the fairest, the noblest of all; that when I first saw you in the opera, I was struck with your beauty, and afterwards in that lonely castle, where you led so isolated a life, a personal acquaintance did not dispel that illusion. Now, when I see you struggling against the adverse tide of life—forsaken by your husband,—surrounded by envy, with no happiness save the society of your child,—why will you not let me consecrate to your pleasure a soul which would be only too happy to dedicate itself to you? Why will you evade my sympathy? Why not let me be the sharer of those sorrows which you try to conceal?"

"Oh, count!" I cried, bursting into tears, as he held my hands; "you must not talk thus to me; remember I am a married woman; respect my situation. Whatever may be my sentiments toward you, I must smother them, and you, for my sake, must do the same."

"I? No, never can I do that! your sweet image is too deeply impressed upon my heart: there shall it remain a sacred solace to me. Oh! why did we not meet before your marriage, when you first made your appearance here? why do we only understand each other when it is too late?"

"Yes; ask the question of fate: in vain have I demanded it. Why do I continually long for a shade which eludes my grasp? Why does solitude ever haunt my footsteps?"

"But I offer you society, happiness; everything on earth that I can command shall be yours. Has not your husband deserted you? what faith do you owe to him? If you returned my love; if you would honor me by your confidence, imagine, my Genevra, what days of happiness might be in store for us."

"Count!" I exclaimed, clasping both hands before my eyes, "forbear: I pray you forbear. I do like you, I acknowledge it; but this must be our last meeting. This must be the first, last, only expression of my feelings; and I feel I am doing wrong even in saying this. Consider, what happiness could I feel in doing anything that could reflect upon my character, hitherto so unblemished? What joy could I experience in a future clouded with shame? How differently should I regard you from that calm-abiding sentiment of security with which a wife regards her husband? What a tempest of emotions would succeed the happy quiet I have always enjoyed! And can you wish me to change even the uncertain life I now lead for such a scene? Depend upon it, dear count, we are better as we are. The feelings we now entertain for each other are pure; do not let us dim them by guilt.'

"You love me then?" he whispered, still holding my hands; "you acknowledge it; say it again;—if we are to be hereafter separated, let me at least be sure of that,—say so, Genevra."

"Why, oh, why do you still tempt me? if you know I like you, you know it without my telling you: words are easily spoken: they might deceive you."

"Not words from your mouth, my Genevra. I distrust the world generally, but I know in whom to confide; and who could distrust you?"

"Oh! if you only knew how miserable I feel, you would pity me," I passionately exclaimed, comprehending the necessity of our separation, yet feeling wretched at that thought. "Let us talk of something else; let us try and remain friends only."

"Friends!" said he, vehemently, starting from his knees, dropping my hands, and rapidly walking the room. "My feelings could never answer to so cold a title, nor could yours if they are what I wish them to be. No, dear lady, we can never again be merely *friends*," and he emphasized the word scornfully. He walked on for some minutes, then suddenly pausing before me, looked long at my face.

"How beautiful, how truthful you are! how misplaced is your present position!" then, as if animated by a frenzy of feeling, he again caught my hands, and drawing me to the open window, said:—"Genevra, look there; look at that beautiful scene! see how the sun gilds the lofty domes; the tall trees, the gardens, the flowers! see how he warms whatever he looks upon, and his light might also warm two loving hearts, if my prayer was heard. Fly, Genevra, fly with me," and he moved, drawing my hand toward the door; but I, though penetrated by a profound emotion, remained immovable, and suppressing all externalindications of it, quietly drew him back to the casement, and pointing to the clear blue sky, now near twilight, said to him:

"You spoke to me allegorically: I will answer you the same. As you said to me at Baie, when we together stood upon the shore, watching the little schooner struggling for anchorage, which it at last secured, and you predicted that thus would it be with me; so do I say to you now,—behold that heavy white cloud, obscuring the light of the sky; see it gradually moves away, and the light shines clear again: so will destiny alter for us; wait and hope;—everything is comprised in these words."

"No, Genevra, I have no hope now: this is not an occasion on which hope is permitted me. If this is our last meeting (and your refusal has signified it), give me one of those fair curls, that when I

look upon it, I may recall the lovely head on which it grew: yes, give me one of them, and let me paint your beautiful eyes, your lips, your cheeks, your whole face, your whole figure, on my heart; but memory has been the artist: who could paint as well as she?"

A pair of tapestry scissors lay upon the table; he took them up, and tremblingly severed one of my curls. It was soft and silky, and at least half a yard long. He smoothed the glossy tress, then laid it in his bosom, and turned from me as if to go. I saw nothing, felt nothing, but that he was going away.

"Stay! stay! you are not going from me thus indifferently; not thus forever?"

"Have you not said so? have you not bade me go? am I not obeying you?"

"Yes, you are obeying me. I meant what I said: but stay yet awhile; I have something to say. I ——," overpowered by my own sadness, my head sank upon his shoulder, and with my hands pressed to my eyes, the tears forced their way through them. Suddenly he encircled me with his arms, and bowing that proud yet noble head on mine, smoothed the ringlets from my brow.

"My beautiful Genevra—you will let me call you mine, will you not?" I bowed acquiescence;—I could not speak. "Since you refuse my love, decline my visits, I shall write you: you will not refuse me that pleasure, will you?"

"No," I stammered.

"To-morrow then, a letter shall explain. Farewell, now,—farewell, beautiful one."

He went toward the door. I stood motionless. As he turned half round before opening the door, I involuntarily stepped toward him. He extended his arms,—I rushed into them, and clung convulsively to him, as a drowning man catches at a straw.

"My God! how hard it is," he ejaculated, as he tore himself away, and the echo of his footsteps died away on my ear. I still grasped at air, as if seeking him, and it was some moments before I could convince myself that he was really gone. Then I went to the windows, pushed back the curtains, admitted air and light, and sought to cool my burning forehead,—to recall my scattered thoughts,—but neither air nor light brought me relief. Objects were dim; nothing appeared as it had in the morning. The sound of voices and carts in the streets below sounded strange and unnatural. One only thought haunted me, dwelt in my mind, lingered in my ears,—he was gone—I had sent him away. I knew I had acted honorably, uprightly; that

I had shown myself to be virtuous and high principled; but I was miserable,—utterly wretched. I recalled his winning ways, his lofty mind, his handsome person: I imagined my destiny united to his,—imagined myself his wife:—I could be his on no other terms. Then I revelled in ideal happiness,—then no invidious fate stood between us, but I stood lawfully by his side;—then I was happy.

Thus pre-occupied, agitated and desponding, I sat till dusk had thrown a veil over the fair city. I did not notice, but dreamed on, and was only aroused from my meditations by the entrance of Pasiphae with lights.

* * * * * * *

The next morning, more dead than alive, I went to rehearsal. The performance was tedious—the theatre cold. I hurried through, glad to escape from the tiresome scene, and returned home, where Pasiphae handed me a letter. In haste and confusion I opened it. It was from the count:—

"You have told me I cannot be to you what I wish to be. You have bade me be your friend, and as I cannot be that with safety either to you or myself, we must see each other no more; at least not now, as you say; but to me the prospect of a future lawful re-union is very dim and remote. But you have not denied me the honor and pleasure of writing you, and that shall be a slight link of friendship between us when I am far away,—for I intend leaving, a few days hence, for Epirus, having to-day resigned my commission as chamberlain to his majesty,—and I shall treasure the precious replies you send me as mementos breathing your own pure spirit.

"I shall resume my lonely wanderings in the Levant, where two years ago, I spent many happy hours in silent contemplation. To those scenes I shall transport your fairy form, and in your imaginary society, the ruined grandeur of Athens,—the stately remains of Agrigentum,—the classic shores of Troy,—will acquire new beauties for me from association. Would that you were with me,—that your dreamy, philosophic mind, might conjure up visions of past magnificence, and revel in the recollections of what it was, contrasted with what it is.

"But why do I wander into dreams again? Suffice it to say, that I must go while yet I have the will to do so, and in bidding *you* farewell, I feel as if bidding adieu to life. But most generally in life so it is. No sooner have you found a sympathetic mind,—one in whose society existence would wing itself away only too delightfully,—than

some fatal accident tears her away, as if Providence envied human felicity, so rarely is it found on earth. I know, however, that that angelic virtue which has so nobly sustained you thus far, will continue to do so to the end; and that it will, of itself, be a great reward. And that heaven may shower upon your pathway roses, the brightest, the most beautiful, is the fervent prayer of your own

"Alfieri Calabrella."

Below his signature, was written in small characters,—"I shall write you next from Epirus, and expect an answer there."

I read it again and again,—I kissed the words and examined the handwriting,—then I folded it, and carefully laid it away in an album. Within a week, then, he would be away on his journey to Epirus. Far away from me: I should only hear from him through the indifferent communication of letters; and how unhappy I should feel when I actually saw him depart. But I felt in my own heart that I had acted rightly, and the consciousness of moral rectitude upheld me.

That night I played the part of Norma to a crowded house. Again the lips and eyes of royalty applauded me. Never did I look better: the excitement of my mind had sent the hot blood to my cheeks, and my long auburn hair, falling to my waist in spiral ringlets, relieved my face. An unwonted inspiration came over me that night, and my voice was unusually clear; the house was in an uproar of delight, but neither elated by my triumph, nor caring for the admiration I elicited, I was about leaving the stage, when the silk curtains of the lower stage box were drawn aside, and the beautiful, but pale and sad face of the count presented itself to my view. So sudden was the encounter of our eyes, so strange this unexpressed adieu, that I scarcely had recollection enough to leave the stage.

Determined to avoid the crowd which always awaited me in the green-room, I requested the manager to hand me to my calesso, which he did, and I drove to my hotel.

It was one o'clock. Pasiphae sat in the bedroom near an open window,—Raphael lay on his bed in a sweet slumber. I thought I saw something glitter on my dressing table: going towards it, I perceived a small Tripoli chain, with a tiny gold heart attached to it, and a slip of paper pinned to it, with these words written upon it:

"Let the child wear this in remembrance of me. Calabrella."

I asked Pasiphae who had brought it. She said an African servant had left it an half hour before. It was a delicate parting gift to my child, and a souvenir for me: but no, I was mistaken —so slight a

present was not intended indirectly for me. Three days after a small package was handed me. I opened it, and beheld an exquisite miniature of the count, set in brilliants. The beautiful black eyes seemed to smile on me with their languid fervor; the clear white complexion, the long nose, slightly acquiline, and waving black hair, were all detailed naturally; the blending and commingling of expression, which gave an air of haughtiness and benevolence to his countenance, was all there.

That was his parting gift: that day he left Naples.

If I had been unhappy in the struggle between love and duty, how much more so was I not when left utterly alone in that great city; when I looked forward and saw nothing, when I looked back on strange scenes, and at the present which was so unsatisfactory.

I renewed my engagement, and continued to sing; from my unprotected position, I was necessarily exposed to covert attacks of the most dishonorable character; and one such I received from a Baron Reichstadt, in the shape of an impertinent note, which I answered as it deserved, and dismissed him. One or two other inuendos I met with, and although I bore them all with an outward calm of stoicism; yet within I felt the bitter humiliation of a proud woman, that such indignities should be put upon me.

The stagnant calm of a monotonous routine, requires little detail; to rise early, attend to my child, then go to rehearsal as often as a new opera was to be performed; practise my favorite songs, then walk on the Toledo, and dine at six, completed my daily existence. I received a glowing letter from the count, dated Epirus, in which he thrillingly described the country, dwelt upon its associations, its desolate, ruined condition now; then delicately bringing the subject back to reality, spoke of himself, of me. I will not insert it here, nor the many others he sent me equally beautiful; my story is drawing to a close, my kind friend, and I am convinced its length must have already tired you.

He continued his travels in the Levant and through the East, while I went to Florence, to fulfil an engagement there. The charming society of that fair town; the fine scenery of the city itself, and the air of repose so different to the busy activity of Naples, combined to cheer and calm me. There I remained a month, and when I left, it was with feelings of regret. I carried away with me (they said) the hearts and imaginations of all; but if I did so, it was unconciously, for never had I exerted myself less.

Genoa next claimed my attention, and it was three months ere I

saw Naples again. The laurels I won seemed to me to adorn the head of a corpse, so listlessly did I regard my fame.

Visions of my husband and the count haunted my dreams, and I always saw them under strange circumstances, in strange places, when I would seem to be trying to reach either one or the other, but could not get near them, some obstacle always interposed,—then in my despair, I would feel as I felt at parting with the count. From these tumultuous dreams I awoke in terror, thankful they were mere dreams; and my perceptions being rendered more acute by these nocturnal visitations, I would renew my anxious searches for my husband, and send new agents to endeavor to discover him; but in vain, I heard nothing more of him.

Six months elapsed in the same quiet way, when one day, as I was walking up and down my parlor, leading Raphael by the hand, a servant announced that an old man wished to see me.

"Show him in," said I, and he presently returned, ushering in a tall man, attired in sailor's clothes. He came towards me, holding his tarpaulin-hat in his hand, and apparently confused at my presence.

"Is this the lady?" asked he, bashfully.

"I am Madame de Serval, do you wish to see me?"

"Yes, lady, I have a letter for you from Pondicherry."

"From Pondicherry,—who can it be from?—I know no one there. Give it me."

I extended my hand, and the sailor placed in it a letter, coarsely folded and sealed. I hastily tore it open, and read the following:

"A gentleman giving his name as Monsieur de Serval, committed suicide in my house six days ago, by blowing his brains out with a pocket pistol. Having by accident seen a Neapolitan paper, containing a description of a Madame de Serval, a great singer, I address this letter to the lady in question, thinking, from the names, that there may be some relationship between the dead gentleman and the lady. If there is, I beg she will answer this, and tell me what is to be done with his effects, which consist of several large chests, heavily locked with padlocks, and four trunks, together with a toilette case of rare value, the interior being set with gold, and the utensils of the same metal, adorned with precious stones.

"The gentleman was buried in the English burying ground, and a small sum of money in his purse paid for the interment.

"JEROME TOBIA.

"*Pondicherry, January 10th.*"

When I had read this fatal letter, I endeavored to look around for the man who had brought it, but I could not see him: the room darkened, and, with a wild shriek, I fell into Pasiphae's arms, and lost all recollection.

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I must carry you onward another year. When I had sufficiently recovered from the shock of this unexpected news, I sent to Pondicherry, and had the remains of my unfortunate husband brought to Naples. I thought I should have gone mad when I saw the body: and with bitter sadness did I consign it to mother earth. A marble tombstone was placed over him in the cemetery of the convent of Sacre Cœur. Of his adventures, or the cause of his going to Pondicherry, I never knew. All I learned was, that he came there, boarded at the house of the man who had written me, and was gentlemanly and reserved. They knew nothing of him. He told no one any thing concerning himself. He had been there some weeks at the period of his self-destruction; and it was merely from accident that the landlord had supposed, that perhaps there might be a relationship between two persons of the same name. Thus, through the merest chance, after six months of anxiety and sadness, did I once more, and for the last time, look upon my Rinaldo's face.

There is a feeling between husband and wife—that is to say, between husbands and wives of any sensibility, who have ever loved—there is, I say, a feeling of affection, which will sooner or later return, however alienated the parties may have become. As I stood over that lifeless form, and thought of his erratic career, and wayward, uncertain character; of his love for me, and subsequent desertion; his entering into a conspiracy against the government; then carried as prisoner of state to Naples; his escape and after-wanderings—all rushed through my mind. Why had he acted thus? Why had he not been honest, upright? Why? Of whom could I ask that question? The earth falling on the coffin was my only reply.

Let me pass over those times.

It was in the dawn of spring, I occupied a small Gothic cottage about a mile from Naples. Two domestics and my child—now a lisping, rosy boy—together with Pasiphae, were its sole tenants. The grounds of this sylvan abode were beautifully laid out, and the fairest flowers planted there. There, too, a marble fountain threw high in air its airy spray—cooling the air and adorning the garden by its beauty.

Several rustic arbors, formed of the pliable bamboo, and shaped in

Gothic turrets, were placed at intervals along the gravel walks, which, meeting in one broad attic before the porch ended there; the birds sang their sweetest songs in the day time; and, at night, the spiritual warbling of the nightingale was the inspirer of the hour.

Here, one sunny afternoon, I sat under the shade of a tree, watching Raphael, and Zoe, his pet dog, running races. The frolicksome glee of the child, the graceful antics of the dog, as he sometimes ran after his baby master,—sometimes solicited pursuit in return,—amused and diverted me. As the child grew older I could trace his father's lineaments in his young features: and the thoughts which were recalled by that resemblance only rendered me sadder than I was. I was reading Petrarch's sonnets, a volume of which had been presented me by my husband during the first months of my marriage: their gloomy descriptions of love and beauty entranced my soul; and, absorbed, I read on, forgetful even of the playful cries of Raphael, when I saw Pasiphae coming towards me, her face lighted with more than usual animation: and with a gleeful voice she told me a man desired to see me in the salon.

"Ask him to send me word what he wants, Pasiphae. I do not wish to see any one this morning. Why did you not deny me yourself? you know I do not want to talk," was my reply; for I was indisposed to see visitors, or answer business engagements.

"Do come, my lady; do come," said Pasiphae, urgently, and joyfully; "indeed you won't regret it; the person has something particular to say."

Thus urged, and wondering what it could be, I rose, leaving my book on the seat, and taking Raphael by the hand, followed by the dog, went into the house. The rooms were all on the ground floor; a broad hall ran through the house, and opening off it were four rooms; two were fitted up as salons, the other two constituted my bed-room and dining-room. They were furnished alike with red velvet drapery, Turkey carpets, and mirrors. Pasiphae regularly each day placed fresh flowers in the Chinese vases on the marble consoles, and their delightful perfume scented the rooms with oriental fragrance.

I entered the room holding Raphael by the hand, and coming from the clear light of the garden into the crimson light of the salon, I could scarcely discern objects.

A tall figure stood with its back towards me, facing the window. As I stepped forward on the carpet, it turned, and I beheld Count Calabrella. Animated with a supernatural joy, I sprang toward him.

"It is you!" I cried; "oh, is it you? You have come! you have come!"

"Yes, beloved one," answered he, as he clasped me in his arms. "At last we are united: now the unstable dreams which have buoyed me up through this long separation, and my lonely wanderings are realized; now we meet, not to feel again the same sorrow we mutually experienced at our last parting."

"Oh, let me die now!" I answered, as I laid my head on his breast, "for now I am happy, and life cannot have many repetitions of such emotions for me."

"Instead of dying, let us picture long years of happiness, and be determined they should be verified," replied my Alfeiri, laughingly.

* * * * * * * *

Naples once again saw me as a bride; not as at the first, blooming with health and joy, my mind in an ecstatic rhapsody of romance, but a woman chastened by experience, that best of monitors. Subdued, but not downcast, was my mien the morning of my bridal: the sobered happiness of my husband's face was mirrored in mine, and surely I could not have had a more beautiful mirror.

And in that marriage I was supremely happy; my life glided like a fairy dream away. The elegance of mind and manner which captivated at first, did not prove, on mature acquaintance, a fictitious dress, worn merely for ornament. Judgment, tempered by feeling, guided him, and in obeying such a guide, how could he fail to act rightly? The calm good sense, the nobility of soul, and sweet disposition of Alfeiri, day by day, more completely gained my love and esteem.

Before leaving Naples, on a journey we took, soon after our marriage, to the north of Italy, I chanced to meet in the suburbs of the town—while walking with my husband—old Acte, the sybil of the rock. She stopped my way, and looking at me with her piercing eyes, said, "Well, fair lady, we meet again: I knew we should; and the other, where is she? You need not tell me: I know already;—she is dead. She lies on the shore, where the winds howl and the waters beat. Say, lady, say, have not my words proved true?" demanded she, in her shrill tones.

"Yes, good woman, you were right," was my hasty reply, as I and my husband hurried away, anxious to avoid any farther conversation with the weird-woman.

Soon after we took our departure on a tour through the north of Europe. Those magnificent cities, beautiful scenery, and the different nations we visited, acquired new interest in my eyes, when viewed in

such society. Then, after we had satiated our eyes and ears with the wonders of other lands, we came finally to the Eternal City, where I have had the pleasure of forming your acquaintance; and I number it as one of the most agreeable episodes of my life: so, also, does my husband.

My tale is done. You have asked it of me, and knowing your integrity, I feel no hesitancy in complying with the request. The hours I have passed in your studio have been among the pleasantest I have spent in Rome.

Should the count and myself never have the pleasure of seeing you again, at least the copy of my portrait and this diary will seem to be an invisible link to the chain of thoughts between us three.

Adieu, dear Signor Carrara: we shall leave to-morrow, and have completed this in haste to leave with you.

GENEVRA CARABRELLA.

Rome, April 6th, ——

The latter part of this diary was very old, yellow, and much torn, from apparently repeated readings: I had some difficulty in decyphering it. Its perusal had deeply interested me, so I folded it up, and rose upon my feet. I saw my little time-piece indicated the hour of one, and a moment after there came a violent knocking at the door, and then Morton's stentorian voice was fully audible.

"Clarence, I say Clarence, are you within? if you are, for God's sake answer; there's some infernal thing in my room which has kept me from sleeping for the last hour. I don't know what it is, and I can't find out, for my light's gone out; come here and bring a candle for pity's sake."

I seized my expiring candle and rushed into his apartment, where stood in the middle of the floor my friend, apparently in a state of great bewilderment; the chairs were thrown about in confusion, and clothes were lying here and there; the curtains of the bed half pulled down.

"What is it, Morton? what's the matter?" I cried, bringing the luminary to bear upon the chaos.

"What's the matter? why that's just what I want to know myself; for the last hour I have heard nothing but chairs upset, the hangings scratched at, and my own hair and face most delightfully scratched. When I stretched out my hands, seeking to discover the cause of the mischief, I grasped empty air; I could see nothing, all was darkness:

and thus have I been bored; now take your candle and try and find out what it is."

I began a tour of the apartment, but saw nothing, except luggage piled on luggage, dressing cases, brushes, combs, &c., &c.; when going around the bed, I heard a sardonic laugh, and looking up, saw perched on the tester, a monkey; the property of a fellow boarder, who, by some means, had contrived to secrete himself in my friend's room, and consequently annoy him by his tricks. Taking the mischievous animal by his fore legs I put him out the room, much to Morton's relief, who exclaimed,

"Is that the thing? well, it has been troubling me enough, the plague; I thought satan himself was here. Thank you, Clarence, my dear fellow; what time is it?"

I told him, then went to bed.

The next day I waited on Signor Ferra, the attorney; he lived in a dark, dirty street, in an old tumble-down house. Upon opening Carrara's will, I found, to my utter amazement, that with the exception of the house in which he lived, and the gallery of paintings, he had made me heir to his considerable property in Rome and the environs, together with the beautiful portrait of Genevra. My kindness to the solitary old artist, had not been ill repaid; so impossible it is for us in this strange existence, to foresee the result of even the slightest action; and, which only more fully demonstrated to me the propriety of always being polite.

A few days after, Morton and myself left Rome for Athens.

THE END.